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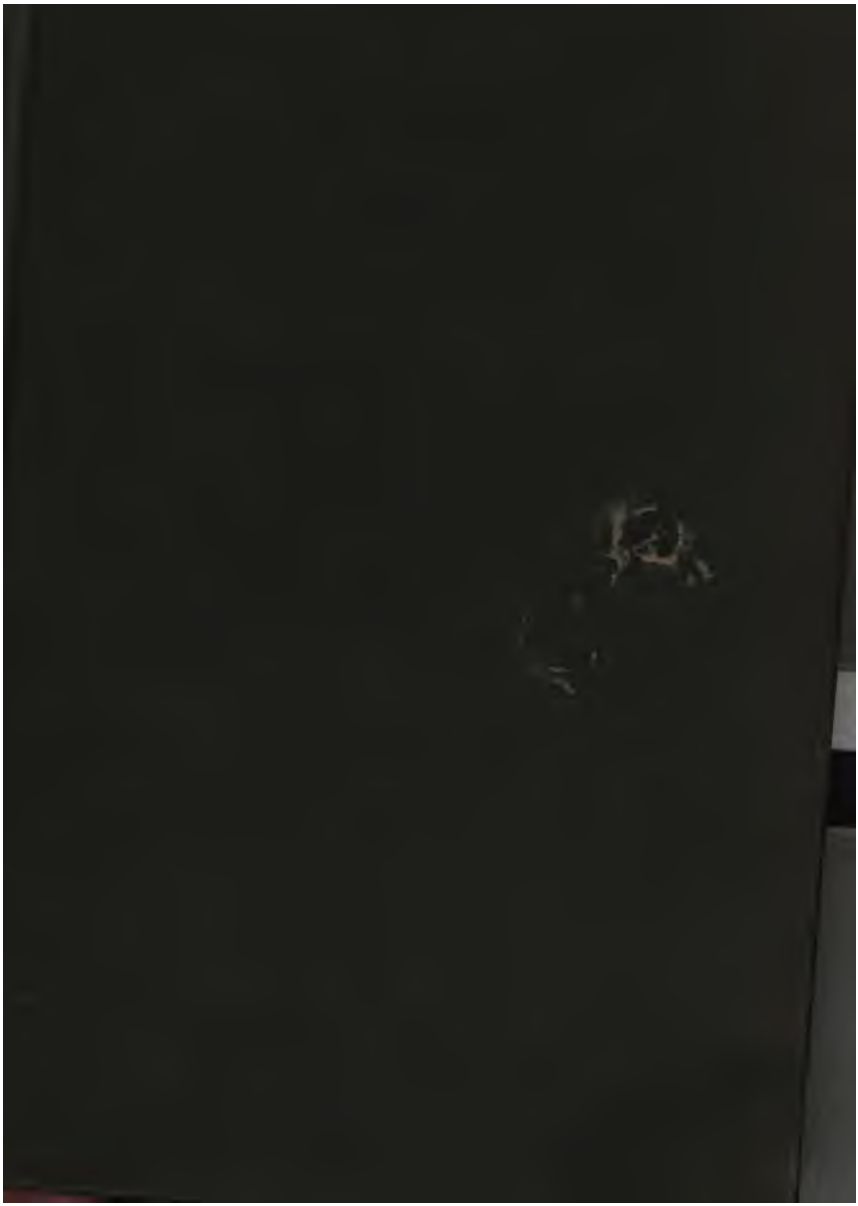

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MILTON'S ARCADES AND COMUS

WITH INTRODUCTION, NOTES AND INDEXES

BY

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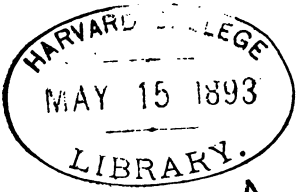

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PREFACE.

THE text of the poems included in this volume is substantially that of Professor Masson's "Globe" edition of Milton's *Poetical Works*, 1877. I have to thank Messrs Macmillan and Co. for their courtesy in allowing me to use this text. In common with all recent editors of Milton I am under great obligations to Professor Masson. School-editions of *Comus* and *Arcades* I have avoided using.

As some attention is paid in the notes to points of etymology, I may say that the authors from whom most of the information has been taken are Professor Skeat, Professor Earle, Dr Morris, and, for French words, Brachet. The *New English Dictionary*, too, has been consulted often. I have endeavoured to reproduce with correctness the views of the writers mentioned; and it need scarcely be added that responsibility for any errors that may be noticed rests *with me.*

In editing *Comus* and *Arcades* I have tried to illustrate the fact that each—especially *Comus*—was written with a view to actual representation. Remarks therefore have been made in the notes upon the probable details of the performance of either piece; and with the same object a sketch (necessarily brief) of the history of the Masque has been given in the *Introduction.* Mr Fleay's great work, the *Chronicle History* of the stage, contains the facts that bear on the development of the Masque, and Mr Symonds in his *Shakspere's Predecessors* furnishes exactly the criticism that we want, and from him should expect. To each I owe a considerable debt.

Mr Leonard Whibley, of Pembroke College, kindly read through the proof-sheets of the *Introduction*, offering much friendly and valuable criticism.

A. W. VERITY.

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INTRODUCTION.

LIFE OF MILTON.

MILTON'S life falls into three clearly defined divisions. The first period ends with the poet's return from Italy in 1639; the second at the Restoration in 1660, when release from the fetters of politics enabled him to remind the world that he was a great poet, if not a great controversialist; the third is brought to a close with his death in 1674. The poems given in the present volume date from the first of these periods; but it has been judged convenient that we should summarise briefly the main events of all three.

The three periods in Milton's life.

John Milton was born on December 9, 1608, in London. He came, in his own words, *ex genere honesto*. A family of Miltons had been settled in Oxfordshire since the reign of Elizabeth. The poet's father had been educated at an Oxford school, possibly as a chorister in one of the College choir-schools, and imbibing Anglican sympathies had conformed to the Established Church. For this he was disinherited by his father. He settled in London, following the profession of scrivener. A scrivener combined the occupations of lawyer and law-stationer. It appears to have been a lucrative calling; certainly John Milton (the poet was named after the father) attained to easy circumstances. He married about 1600, and had six children, of whom several died young. The third child was the poet.

Born 1608; the poet's father.

The elder *Milton was* evidently a man of considerable *culture, in particular an* accomplished musician, and a com-

MILTON'S

ARCADES AND COMUS.

The five years (1632—1637) spent at Horton.

Milton's father had settled[1] at Horton in Buckinghamshire. Thither the son retired in 1632. He had gone to Cambridge with the intention of qualifying for some profession, perhaps the Church[2]. This purpose was soon given up, and when Milton returned to his father's house he seems to have made up his mind that there was no profession which he cared to enter. He would choose the better part of studying and preparing himself, by rigorous self-discipline and application, for the far-off divine event to which his whole life moved.

The key to Milton's life.

It was Milton's constant resolve to achieve something that should vindicate the ways of God to men, something great[3] that should justify his own possession of unique powers—powers of which, with no trace of egotism, he proclaims himself proudly conscious. The feeling finds repeated expression in his prose; it is the guiding-star that shines clear and steadfast even through the mists of politics.

[1] As tenant of the Earl of Bridgewater, according to one account; but probably the tradition arose from Milton's subsequent connection with the Bridgewater family.

[2] Cf. Milton's own words, "The Church, to whose service by the intention of my parents and friends I was destined of a child, and in my own resolutions." What kept him from taking orders was not, at first, any difference of belief, but solely his objection to Church discipline and government. "Coming to some maturity of years, and perceiving what tyranny had invaded in the church, that he who would take orders must subscribe slave.....(I) thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing." Milton disliked in particular the episcopal system, and spoke of himself as "Church-outed by the prelates."

[3] Cf. the second sonnet; "How soon hath Time." Ten years later (1641) Milton speaks of the "inward prompting which grows daily upon me, that by labour and intent study, which I take to be my *portion in* this life, joined with the strong propensity of nature, *I might perhaps leave* something so written to after times, as they *should not willingly let* it die."

He has a mission to fulfil, a purpose to accomplish, no less than the most fanatic of religious enthusiasts; and the means whereby this end is to be attained are fourfold: devotion to learning, devotion to religion, ascetic purity of life, and the pursuit of σπουδαιότης or "excellent seriousness" of thought.

This period of self-centred isolation lasted from 1632 to 1637. Gibbon tells us among the many wise things contained in that most wise book the *Autobiography* that every man has two educations, that which he receives from his teachers and that which he owes to himself; the latter being infinitely the more important. During these five years Milton completed his second education; ranging the whole world of classical antiquity and absorbing the classical genius so thoroughly that the ancients were to him what they afterwards became to Landor, what they have never become to any other English poet in the same degree, even as the very breath of his being; learning, too, all of art, especially music, that contemporary England could furnish; wresting from modern languages and literatures their last secrets; and combining these vast and diverse influences into a splendid equipment of hard-won, well-ordered culture. The world has known many greater scholars in the technical, limited sense than Milton, but few men, if any, who have mastered more things worth mastering in art, letters and scholarship[1]. It says much for the poet that he was sustained through this period of study, pursued *ohne Hast, ohne Rast*, by the full consciousness that all would be crowned by a masterpiece which should add one more testimony to the belief in that God who ordains the fates of men. It says also a very great deal for the father who suffered his son to follow in this manner the path of learning[2].

[1] Milton's poems with their undercurrent of perpetual allusion are the best proof of the width of his reading; but interesting supplementary evidence is afforded by the commonplace book discovered in 1874, and printed by the *Camden Society*, 1876. It contains extracts from about 80 different authors whose works Milton had studied.

[2] Cf. the poem *Ad Patrem*, 68—72, in which Milton thanks his father for not having forced him to be a merchant or lawyer.

Milton's lyric verse; its relation to contemporary life.

True, Milton gave more than one earnest of his future fame. The dates of the early pieces—*L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Arcades*, *Comus* and *Lycidas*—are not all certain; but probably each was composed at Horton before 1638. We must speak of them elsewhere. Here we may note that four of them have great autobiographic value as an indirect commentary, written from Milton's coign of seclusion, upon the moral crisis through which English life and thought were passing, the clash between the careless hedonism of the Cavalier world and the deepening austerity of Puritanism. In *L'Allegro* the poet holds the balance almost equal between the two opposing tendencies. In *Il Penseroso* it becomes clear to which side his sympathies are leaning. *Comus* makes his position still more definite, and in *Lycidas* he sounds forth a Cassandra-cry of warning against the folly of his generation. About *Lycidas* there rests a certain pathos, in that it is the final utterance of Milton's lyric genius. Here he reaches, in Mr Mark Pattison's words, the high-water mark of English verse; and then—the pity of it—he resigns that place among the *lyrici vates* of which the Roman singer was ambitious, and for nearly twenty years suffers his lyre to hang mute and rusty in the temple of the Muses.

Travels in Italy; close of the first period in his life.

The composition of *Lycidas* may be assigned to the year 1637. In the spring of that year Milton started for Italy. He had long made himself a master of Italian, and it was natural that he should seek inspiration in the land where many English poets, from Chaucer to Shelley, have found it. Milton remained abroad some fifteen months. Originally he had intended to include Sicily and Greece in his travels, but news of the troubles in England hastened his return. He was brought face to face with the question whether or not he should bear his part in the coming struggle; whether without self-reproach he could lead any longer this life of learning and indifference to the public weal. He decided as we might have expected that he would decide, though some good critics see cause to regret the decision. Milton puts his

Cause of his return to England.

position very clearly. "I considered it," he says "dishonourable to be enjoying myself at my ease in foreign lands, while my countrymen were striking a blow for freedom." And again: "Perceiving that the true way to liberty followed on from these beginnings, inasmuch also as I had so prepared myself from my youth that, above all things, I could not be ignorant what is of Divine and what of human right, I resolved, though I was then meditating certain other matters, to transfer into this struggle all my genius and all the strength of my industry."

The second period, 1639—1660. Milton abandons poetry.

The summer of 1639 (July) found Milton back in England. Immediately after his return he wrote the *Epitaphium Damonis*, the beautiful elegy in which he lamented the death of his school friend, Diodati. *Lycidas* was the last of the English lyrics: the *Epitaphium*, which should be studied in close connection with *Lycidas*, the last of the long Latin poems. Thenceforth, for a long spell, the rest was silence, so far as concerned poetry. The period which for all men represents the strength and maturity of manhood, which in the cases of other poets produces the best and most characteristic work, is with Milton a blank. In twenty years he composed no more than a bare handful of Sonnets, and even some of these are infected by the taint of political *animus*. Other interests filled his thoughts—the question of Church-reform, education, marriage, and, above all, politics.

Pamphlets on the Church and Education.

Milton's first treatise upon the government of the Established Church (*Of Reformation touching Church-Discipline in England*) appeared in 1641. Others followed in quick succession. The abolition of Episcopacy was the watch-word of the enemies of the Anglican Church—the *delenda est Carthago* cry of Puritanism, and no one enforced the point with greater eloquence than Milton. During 1641 and 1642 he wrote five pamphlets on the subject. Meanwhile he was studying the principles of education. On his return from Italy he had undertaken the training of his nephews[1].

[1] Edward and John Phillips, sons of Milton's only sister. Both subsequently joined the Royalist party. To Edward Phillips we owe a memoir of the poet.

This led to consideration of the best educational methods; and in the *Tractate of Education*, 1644, Milton assumed the part of educational theorist. In the previous year, May, 1643, he married[1]. The marriage proved, at the time, unfortunate. Its immediate outcome was the pamphlets on Divorce. Clearly he had little leisure for literature proper.

Marriage.

The finest of Milton's prose works, the *Areopagitica*, a plea for the free expression of opinion, was published in 1644. In 1645[2] he edited the first collection of his poems. In 1649 his advocacy of the anti-royalist cause was recognised by the offer of a post under the newly appointed Council of State. His vindication of the execution of Charles I., *The Tenure of Kings*, had appeared

Political Pamphlets. Appointment to Latin Secretaryship.

[1] His wife (who was only seventeen) was Mary Powell, eldest daughter of Richard Powell, of Forest Hill, a village some little distance from Oxford. She went to stay with her father in July 1643, and refused to return to Milton; why, it is not certain. She was reconciled to her husband in 1645, bore him four children, and died in 1652, in her twenty-seventh year. It may be conjectured that the scene in *P. L.* x. 909—946, in which Eve begs forgiveness of Adam, reproduced the poet's personal experience.

[2] i.e. old style. The volume was entered on the registers of the Stationers' Company under the date of October 6th, 1645. It was published on Jan. 2, 1645—6, with the following title-page:

"*Poems of Mr. John Milton, both English and Latin, compos'd at several times. Printed by his true Copies. The Songs were set in Musick by Mr. Henry Lawes, gentleman of the King's Chappel, and one of His Majesties private Musick.*

'————*Baccare frontem*
Cingite, ne vati noceat mala lingua futuro.'
VIRGIL, *Eclog.* 7.

Printed and publish'd according to Order. London, Printed by Ruth Raworth, for Humphrey Moseley, and are to be sold at the signe of the Princes Arms in Pauls Churchyard. 1645."

From the prefatory Address to the Reader it is clear that the collection was due to the initiative of the publisher. Milton's own feeling is expressed by the motto, where the words "*vati futuro*" show that, as

earlier in the same year. Milton accepted the office, becoming Latin[1] Secretary to the Committee of Foreign Affairs. There was nothing distasteful about his duties. He drew up the despatches to foreign governments, translated state-papers, and served as interpreter to foreign envoys. Had his duties stopped here his acceptance of the post would, I think, have proved an unqualified gain. It brought him into contact with the first men in the state[2], gave him a practical insight into the working of national affairs and the motives of human action; in a word, furnished him with that experience of life which is essential to all poets who aspire to be something more than "the idle singers of an empty day." But unfortunately the secretaryship entailed the necessity of defending at every turn the past course of the revolution and the present policy of the Council. Milton, in fact, held a perpetual brief as advocate for his party. Hence the endless and unedifying controversies into which he drifted; controversies which wasted the most precious years of his life, warped, as some critics think, his nature, and eventually cost him his eyesight.

The advantage of the post.

Its disadvantage.

Between 1649 and 1660 Milton produced no less than eleven pamphlets. Several of these arose out of the publication of the famous *Eikon Basilike*. The book was printed in 1649 and created so extraordinary a

Milton's writings on behalf of the Commonwealth.

he judged, his great achievement was yet to come. The volume was divided into two parts, the first containing the English, the second the Latin poems. *Comus* was printed at the close of the former, with a separate title-page to mark its importance. See introduction to *Comus*.

[1] A Latin Secretary was required because the Council scorned, as Edward Phillips says, "to carry on their affairs in the wheedling, lisping jargon of the cringing French." Milton's salary was £288, in modern money about £900.

[2] There is no proof that Milton ever had personal intercourse with Cromwell, and Mr Mark Pattison implies that he was altogether neglected by the foremost men of the time. Yet it seems unlikely that the Secretary of the Committee should not have been on friendly terms with some of its members, Vane, for example, and Whitelocke.

sensation that Milton was asked to reply to it. This he did with *Eikonoklastes*, introducing the wholly unworthy sneer at Sidney's *Arcadia* and the awkwardly expressed reference to Shakespeare[1]. Controversy of this barren type has the inherent disadvantage that once started it may never end. The Royalists commissioned the Leyden professor, Salmasius, to prepare a counterblast, the *Defensio Regia*, and this in turn was met by Milton's *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio*, 1651, over the preparation of which he lost what little power of eyesight remained[2]. Salmasius retorted, and died before his second *farrago* of scurrilities was issued: Milton was bound to answer, and the *Defensio Secunda* appeared in 1654. Neither of the combatants gained anything by the dispute; while the subsequent development of the controversy in which Milton crushed the Amsterdam pastor

His blindness.

[1] It would have been more to the point to remind his readers that the imprisoned king must have spent a good many hours over La Calprenède's *Cassandre*.

[2] Perhaps this was the saddest part of the episode. Milton tells us in the *Defensio Secunda* that his eyesight was injured by excessive study in boyhood: "from the twelfth year of my age I scarce ever left my lessons and went to bed before midnight. This was the first cause of my blindness." Continual reading and writing must have increased the infirmity, and by 1650 the sight of the left eye had gone. He was warned that he must not use the other for book-work. Unfortunately this was just the time when the Commonwealth stood most in need of his services. If Milton had not written the first *Defence* he might have retained his partial vision. The choice lay between private good and public duty. He repeated in 1650 the sacrifice of 1639. "In such a case I could not listen to the physician, not if Æsculapius himself had spoken from his sanctuary; I could not but obey that inward monitor, I know not what, that spoke to me from heaven.....I concluded to employ the little remaining eyesight I was to enjoy in doing this, the greatest service to the common weal it was in my power to render" (*Second Defence*). By the Spring of 1652 Milton was quite blind. He was then in his forty-fourth year. The reference in *P. L.* III. 21—26, leaves it doubtful from what disease he suffered, whether cataract or amaurosis.

and professor, Morus, goes far to prove the contention of Mr Mark Pattison, that it was an evil day when the poet left his study at Horton to do battle for the Commonwealth amid the vulgar brawls of the market-place.

"Not here, O Apollo,
Were haunts meet for thee."

The Restoration releases Milton from politics. Return to poetry.

Fortunately this poetic interregnum in Milton's life was not destined to last much longer. The Restoration came, a blessing in disguise, and in 1660 the ruin of Milton's political party and of his personal hopes, the absolute overthrow of the cause for which he had fought for twenty years, left him free. The author of *Lycidas* could once more become a poet[1].

Should Milton have kept apart from political life?

One reply to this question.

Much has been written upon this second period, 1639—1660, and a word may be said here. We saw what parting of the ways confronted Milton on his return from Italy. Did he choose aright? Should he have continued upon the path of learned leisure? There are writers who argue that Milton made a mistake. A poet, they say, should keep clear of political strife: fierce controversy can benefit no man: who touches pitch must expect to be, certainly will be, defiled: Milton sacrificed twenty of the best years of his life, doing work which an underling could have done and which was not worth doing: another *Comus* might have been written, a loftier *Lycidas:* that literature should be the poorer by the absence of these possible masterpieces, that the second greatest genius which England has produced should in a way be the "inheritor of unfulfilled renown," is and must be a thing entirely and terribly deplorable. This is the view of the purely literary critic. Mr Mark Pattison writes very much to this effect.

[1] We have not attempted to trace the growth of Milton's political and religious opinions: "Through all these stages," Mr Mark Pattison writes, "Milton passed in the space of twenty years—Church-Puritan, Presbyterian, *Royalist, Independent,* Commonwealth's man, Oliverian." *To illustrate this statement* would need many pages.

The opposite view.

There remains the other side of the question. It may fairly be contended that had Milton elected in 1639 to live the scholar's life apart from "the action of men," *Paradise Lost*, as we have it, could never have been written. Knowledge of life and human nature, insight into the problems of men's motives and emotions, grasp of the broader issues of the human tragedy, all these were essential to the author of an epic poem; they could only be obtained through commerce with the world; they would have remained beyond the reach of a recluse. Dryden complained that Milton saw nature through the spectacles of books: we might have had to complain that he saw men through the same medium. Fortunately it is not so: and it is not so because at the age of twenty-two he threw in his fortunes with those of his country; like the diver in Schiller's ballad he took the plunge which was to cost him so dear. The mere man of letters will never move the world. Æschylus fought at Marathon: Shakespeare was practical to the tips of his fingers; a better business man than Goethe there was not within a radius of a hundred miles of Weimar.

Milton's own opinion.

This aspect of the question is emphasised by Milton himself. The man he says, "who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem, that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honourablest things, *not*[1] *presuming to sing high praises of heroic men or famous cities, unless he have within himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy.*" Again, in estimating the qualifications which the writer of an epic such as he contemplated should possess, he is careful to include "insight into all seemly and generous arts and *affairs*."

How politics may have influenced the poet.

Truth usually lies half-way between extremes: perhaps it does so here. No doubt, Milton did gain very greatly by breathing awhile the larger air of public life, even though that air was often tainted by

[1] The italics are not Milton's.

miasmatic impurities. No doubt, too, twenty years of eristic unrest must have left their mark even on Milton. In one of the very few places[1] where he "abides our question," Shakespeare writes:

> O! for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
> The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
> That did not better for my life provide,
> Than public means, which public manners breeds:
> Thence comes it that my name receives a brand;
> And almost thence my nature is subdu'd
> To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.

Milton's genius was subdued in this way. If we compare him, the Milton of the great epics and of *Samson Agonistes*, with Homer or Shakespeare—and none but the greatest can be his parallel—we find in him a certain want of humanity, a touch of narrowness. He lacks the large-heartedness, the genial, generous breadth of Shakespeare; the sympathy and sense of the *lacrimæ rerum* that even in *Troilus and Cressida* or *Timon of Athens* are there for those who have eyes wherewith to see them. Milton reflects many of the less gracious aspects of Puritanism, its intolerance, want of humour, one-sided intensity. He is stern, unbending, austere, and it seems natural to assume that this narrowness was to a great extent the price he paid for two decades of ceaseless special pleading and dispute. The real misfortune of his life lay in the fact that he fell on evil, angry days when there was no place for moderate men. He had to be one of two things: either a controversialist or a student: there was no *via media*. Probably he chose aright; but we could wish that the conditions under which he chose had been different.

From the Restoration to Milton's death.

The last part of Milton's life, 1660—1674, passed quietly. At the age of fifty-two he was thrown back upon poetry, and could at length discharge his self-imposed obligation. The early poems he had never regarded as a fulfilment of the debt due to his Creator;

[1] *Sonnet* CXI.

even when the fire of political strife burned at its hottest Milton never lost sight of the purpose which had been with him since his boyhood. The main difficulty lay in the selection of a suitable subject. He wavered between themes drawn from the Scriptures and others taken from the history of his own country. For a time he was evidently inclined to choose the Arthurian story[1], the only cycle of events in British history or legend which seems to lend itself naturally to epic treatment. Had he done so we should have lost the *Idylls of the King*. The rough drafts of his projected schemes, now among the Milton MSS.[2] at Trinity College, shew that exactly ninety-nine possible themes occupied his thoughts from time to time; but even as early as 1641 the story of the lost Paradise began to assume prominence. Still, even when the subject was definitively chosen, the question of its treatment—dramatic or epic—remained. Milton contemplated the former. He even commenced work upon a drama of which Satan's address to the sun in the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*[3] formed the exordium. These lines were written about 1642. Milton recited them to his nephew Phillips at the time of their composition. Possibly had Milton not been distracted and diverted from poetry by political and other interests he might from 1642 onwards have continued this inchoate drama

His great work; the subject and treatment.

[1] This project is not mentioned among the schemes enumerated in the Trinity MSS. Cf. however, the *Epitaphium Damonis*, 162—178, and the poem *Mansus*, 80—84. See also the note on *Comus*, 826—841. Among Milton's prose works was a *History of Britain*, written for the most part about 1649, but not printed till 1670. In it he used the materials collected for his abandoned epic on the story of King Arthur.

[2] They include the original drafts of *Arcades*, *Comus*, *Lycidas*, and some of the minor poems, together with Milton's notes on the design of the long poem he meditated composing, and other less important papers. The MSS. were presented to Trinity by a former member of the college, Sir Henry Newton Puckering, who died in 1700. It is not known how they originally came into his possession.

[3] *Bk. IV. ll. 32 et seq.*

and thus produced a dramatic epic akin to *Samson Agonistes*. As things fell out, the scheme was dropped, and never taken up again. When he finally addressed himself to the composition of *Paradise Lost* he had decided in favour of the epic or narrative form.

Following Aubrey (from Aubrey and Phillips most of our information concerning Milton is derived) we may assume that Milton began to write *Paradise Lost* about 1658. He worked continuously at the epic for some five years. It was finished in 1663, the year of his third[1] marriage. Two more years, however, were spent in the necessary revision, and in 1665 Milton placed the completed poem in the hands of his friend Thomas Ellwood[2]. In 1667 *Paradise Lost* was issued from the press[3]. Milton received £5. Before his death he was paid a second instalment, £5. Six editions of the poem had been published by the close of the century.

Paradise Lost begun.

The poem published.

When Ellwood returned the MS. of *Paradise Lost* to Milton

[1] Milton's second marriage took place in the autumn of 1656, i.e. after he had become blind. His wife died in February, 1658. Cf. the *Sonnet*, "Methought I saw my late espoused saint," the pathos of which is heightened by the fact that he had never seen her.

[2] Cf. the account given in Ellwood's *Autobiography:* "after some common discourses had passed between us, he called for a manuscript of his; which, being brought, he delivered to me, bidding me take it home with me and read it at my leisure, and, when I had so done, return it to him with my judgment thereupon. When I came home, and had set myself to read it, I found it was that excellent poem which he intituled *Paradise Lost*."

[3] The delay was due to external circumstances. Milton had been forced by the plague to leave London, settling for a time at Chalfont St Giles in Buckinghamshire, where Ellwood had taken a cottage for him. On his return to London, after "the sickness was over, and the city well cleansed," the Great Fire threw everything into disorder; and there was some little difficulty over the licensing of the poem. For these *reasons the publication* of *Paradise Lost* was delayed till the *autumn of 1667 (Masson).*

he remarked: "Thou hast said much here of *Paradise Lost*, but what hast thou to say of Paradise found?" Possibly we owe *Paradise Regained* to these chance words; or the poem, forming as it does a natural pendant to its predecessor, may have been included in Milton's original design. In any case he must have commenced the second epic about the year 1665. Perhaps he worked at the same time at *Samson Agonistes*. The two poems were published together in 1671.

Paradise Regained: Samson Agonistes.

In giving this bare summary of facts it has not been our purpose to offer any criticism upon the poems. It would take too much space to show why *Samson Agonistes* is in subject-matter the poet's threnody over the fallen form of Puritanism, and in style the most perfectly classical poem in English literature; or again, why some great writers (among them Coleridge and Wordsworth) have pronounced *Paradise Regained* to be in point of artistic execution the most consummate of Milton's works, a judgment which would have pleased the author himself since, according to Phillips, he could never endure to hear *Paradise Regained* "censured to be much inferior to *Paradise Lost*." The latter speaks for itself in the rolling splendour of those organ-sounds which Lord Tennyson has celebrated and alone in his time equalled.

In 1673 Milton brought out a reprint of the 1645 edition of his *Poems*, adding most of the sonnets[1] written in the interval. The last four years of his life were

Close of Milton's life.

[1] The number of Milton's sonnets is twenty-three (if we exclude the piece on "The New Forcers of Conscience"), five of which were written in Italian, probably during the time of his travels in Italy, 1638—9. Ten sonnets were printed in the edition of 1645, the last of them being that entitled (from the *Cambridge* MS.) "To the Lady Margaret Ley." The remaining thirteen were composed between 1645 and 1658. The concluding sonnet, therefore (to the memory of Milton's second wife), immediately preceded his commencement of *Paradise Lost*. *Four of these poems*, (XV. XVI. XVII. XXII.) could not, on account of *their political tone*, be included in the edition of 1673. They were first *published by Edward* Phillips at the end of his memoir of Milton, 1694.

devoted to prose works of no particular interest to us. He continued to live in London. His third marriage had proved happy, and he enjoyed something of the renown which was rightly his. Various well-known men used to visit him—notably Dryden[1], who on one of his visits asked and received permission to dramatise *Paradise Lost*. It does not often happen that a university can point to two such poets among her living sons, each without rival in his generation.

Milton died in 1674, November 8th. He was buried in St Giles' Church, Cripplegate. When we think of him we have to think of a man who lived a life of very singular purity and devotion to duty; who for what he conceived to be his country's good sacrificed—and no one can well estimate the sacrifice—during twenty years the aim that was nearest to his heart and best suited to his genius; who, however, eventually realised his desire of writing a great work *in gloriam Dei*. *His death.*

The sonnet on the "Massacre in Piedmont" is usually considered the finest of the collection, of which the late Rector of Lincoln College edited a well-known edition, 1883. The sonnet inscribed with a diamond on a window pane in the cottage at Chalfont where the poet stayed in 1665 is (in the judgment of a good critic) Miltonic, if not Milton's (Garnett's *Life of Milton*, p. 175).

[1] The lines by Dryden which were printed beneath the portrait of Milton in Tonson's folio edition of *Paradise Lost* published in 1688 are too familiar to need quotation; but it is worth noting that the younger poet had in Milton's lifetime described the great epic as "one of the most noble, and most sublime poems which either this age or nation has produced" (prefatory essay to *The State of Innocence*, 1674). Further, tradition assigned to Dryden (a Catholic and a Royalist) the remark, "this fellow (Milton) cuts us all out and the ancients too."

ARCADES.

Date of the Masque.

Arcades was first printed in the edition of his poems issued by Milton in 1645. We have no direct means of determining when it was written. A probable date, however, is 1633. We may assume that Milton was busy over *Comus* in 1634, and since *Arcades* has great stylistic affinity with the longer Masque and was produced under very similar circumstances, it is fair to suppose that only a brief space of time separated the two poems. Probably *Arcades* was the earlier: in each of Milton's editions of his minor works it precedes *Comus;* and it shows, so far as its fragmentary state permits us to judge, rather less finish and maturity of workmanship. Combining these points, critics are content, for the most part, to take 1633 as the date of the shorter poem.

There is, I think, little to be said in favour of the view which would assign the composition of *Arcades* to an earlier date than 1633—to 1631 or 1630. The evidence of style, the æsthetic test, is never conclusive, but if we compare *Arcades* with the poems undoubtedly written before Milton left Cambridge we shall at least find that it presents a very strong contrast with them. It is, for instance, far more akin to *Comus* than to the *Nativity Ode:* scarcely less so to *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso.* In all four we have much the same atmosphere of calm, the same fragrance and freshness of outdoor life, the same enjoyment of nature and country sights and sounds, so that it is hard to resist the impression that many touches in each were suggested by the quiet woodland scenery of Horton. It will be well therefore and safe to accept with Professor Masson the year 1633.

The title of *Arcades* explains the circumstances of its composition—"Part of an Entertainment presented to the Countess *Dowager of Derby* at Harefield by some Noble Persons of her *Family.*"

The Egerton family for whom Arcades was written.

The Countess Dowager of Derby was a daughter of Sir John Spencer of Althorpe in Northamptonshire, ancestor of the present Earl Spencer. Born about 1560, she married Lord Strange, eldest son of the fourth Earl of Derby. She had several sisters, two of whom—Elizabeth Spencer, afterwards Lady Carey, and Anne Spencer, afterwards Lady Compton—were celebrated by Spenser; as was the Countess herself. Spenser indeed claimed kinship with the Spencer family; cf. the *Prothalamion*[1],

> "Though from another place I take my name,
> An house of auncient fame."

To Lady Carey he dedicated his *Muiopotmos* (1590); to Lady Compton his *Mother Hubberds Tale* (1591); to Lady Strange *The Teares of the Muses*[2]. This last poem was published (in the volume curiously entitled *Complaints*) in 1591. Two years later, September 1593, Lady Strange became Countess of Derby. In the spring of 1594 her husband died (popular report attributing his death to witchcraft), and his widow retained for the rest of her life the title of Alice, Countess Dowager of Derby. The death of the Earl is alluded to in *Colin Clout's Come Home Againe*. The greater portion of that poem had been previously written, indeed soon after Spenser's return to Ireland in 1591; but the whole work was not published till 1595. Between these dates various additions were made, the following lines among them:

> "But Amaryllis, whether fortunate
> Or else unfortunate may I areade,
> That freëd is from Cupids yoke by fate,
> Since which she doth new bands adventure dread."

"Amaryllis" was the Countess of Derby. Apparently she did not fear "new bands adventure." She married in 1600 Sir

[1] 131, 132.

[2] Cf. the note on *Arcades*, line 8. In each "soft dedication" the poet alluded to his relationship. It may be added that the northern branch of the family to which he belonged spelt the name with s.

Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal to Elizabeth. In 1603 he was made Baron Ellesmere; in 1616, Viscount Brackley. For many years the Countess and her husband lived at Harefield in Middlesex; they had purchased the property in 1601. No children were born of the marriage. The Countess, however, had three daughters by her first husband; the Lord Keeper was a widower. His son, Sir John Egerton, married her second daughter, Lady Frances Stanley. The father, shortly after being created Viscount Brackley, died in 1617. The Countess, a widow for the second time, was then in her fifty-sixth year, and till her death in 1637 continued to live at Harefield. In 1617 Sir John Egerton, her son-in-law (and stepson), who had succeeded to the title of Viscount Brackley, received the earldom intended for his father. He became Earl of Bridgewater. It was he who commissioned the performance of *Comus*.

Milton tells us that *Arcades* was performed by "some Noble Persons" of the family of the Countess. "Family" means direct descendants and relatives, and these were sufficiently numerous. The eldest daughter of the Countess, Lady Chandos, lived at Harefield; she was a widow with several children. The second daughter, Countess of Bridgewater, had a very large family, most of whom, no doubt, acted in *Comus*. There were other grandchildren, the family of the third daughter, Countess of Huntingdon. To these might be added the families of the married sisters of the Countess. Milton therefore when he compared her to Cybele, "mother of a hundred gods," indulged in no poetic hyperbole. Nor does it require any strenuous effort of the imagination to conceive the position which the Countess occupied. She was in a way the head of the whole line, a picturesque survival from the great Elizabethan generation of the Spencer family which the great Elizabethan poet, their kinsman, had honoured in "the proud full sail" of his verse. She lived at the noble country house where the Queen had stayed on one of her progresses, the famous visit *in 1602 at which tradition* says (but falsely) that *Othello* was *first performed.* She had seen her three daughters raised by

marriage to splendid rank; she herself bore one of the greatest of English titles; her beauty and personal worth had been rehearsed by more than one writer. There was everything in her past life and present fortunes that could stimulate admiration and reverence. Out of compliment to her the members of her family conceived the happy idea of representing a Masque. Perhaps a birthday or some anniversary of felicitous memory was the immediate occasion. In any case the entertainment added one more link to the chain of illustrious associations which unites the name of the Countess with the history of the first great age of English poetry. Milton ended what Spenser had begun. As long as literature endures, the memory of this noble lady of the Elizabethan and Jacobean world will remain.

Occasion of the performance of Arcades.

A private entertainment at that time meant a Masque[1]. Especially in vogue were slight dramatic pieces which might be characterised as Masque-idylls of a pastoral type, such as could be played in the open air. The classics were ransacked and pillaged for suitable subjects, the result being representations in which fancy and fiction were supreme, realism or strict dramatic propriety conspicuously absent. Great ladies fretted their hour on the level grass, under broad, spreading trees, as goddesses, or nymphs, or shepherdesses more Arcadian than any Alpheus had ever seen on his banks. The young noble from the University who knew exactly how a Latin comedy was rendered in the hall of Trinity, or the Templar who had borne his part in the Christmas Revels of one of the Inns of Court, would masquerade as Apollo, or Sylvanus, or Thyrsis. Everybody was faultless as the graceful figures on a delicate piece of Dresden china or the fine *seigneurs* in the *fêtes champêtres* of Watteau. A lawn made the best of stages; the woodland background supplied the place of scenery; madrigals and choruses that blended with the notes of birds and the splash of fountains heightened the illusion; and if the piece was performed at

The piece is a Dramatic Pastoral.

[1] *See the sketch of the history* of the English Masque given later on.

nightfall (as was the case with *Arcades*[1]), friendly dusk concealed from too critical eyes any imperfections that were best unrevealed.

Popularity of these plays.

We have nothing quite parallel to these entertainments which were very popular and for which Ben Jonson, the first dramatist of the age, or Campion would think it worth while to write the words, and Ferrabosco, Lanière, Coperario the musical setting. Anyone, however, who has read the admirable description of the Court-play in Mr Shorthouse's *Schoolmaster Mark*, or seen an out-of-door performance of *As You Like It*, or some similar piece, will have gained a good idea of the purely fanciful species of idyllic, ideal drama represented by *Arcades*. And in reading the Masque we should bear in mind the circumstances which called it forth and the conditions under which it was rendered. To treat it as simply a piece of exquisite lyric work—which it no doubt is—ignoring its dramatic character and the fact that it may be illustrated by reference to pastorals of a similar nature seems to me a mistake. We cannot appreciate its beauty fully until we have studied it in connection with what Ben Jonson accomplished on the same lines; and, as Mr Symonds points out[2], the style of *Arcades* reflects very directly the influence of Jonson, just as in the last part of *Comus* we catch continuous echoes of the music of Fletcher.

Milton's connection with the Egerton family due to Henry Lawes.

Why Milton, an unknown writer hidden away in a nook of Buckinghamshire, who hitherto had not published a single line, was asked to compose the play, is a matter of conjecture; though, happily, of conjecture not far removed from certainty. It is as clear as anything well can be which does not rest on proof plain and positive that his share in *Arcades* was due to the initiation of Henry Lawes. This well known musician[3] was employed by the Earl and Countess of Bridgewater as music-tutor to their children. When the Earl resolved in 1634 to inaugurate his

[1] *Cf. line 39.* [2] *Shakspere's Predecessors*, p. 361.

[3] *For a brief account of him see the note upon his Dedication prefixed to the 1637 edition of Comus.*

official career in Wales with the festivities which were held at Ludlow Castle in the autumn of that year, the duty of providing a Masque fell upon Lawes. He applied to Milton for the *libretto*. This was probably a repetition of what had occurred in the case of *Arcades*. The younger members of the Bridgewater family had turned to their musical instructor for assistance. It is reasonable to suppose that Lawes induced Milton to furnish the poetic material of the play, that he himself composed the incidental music, arranged the scenes, acted (as in *Comus*) the part of the Genius, and was mainly responsible for the success of the performance. He might quite well have gone to Carew or Shirley, as in the year 1633 he wrote the music for a Masque by each of these writers. But Milton was a friend of long standing. Every musician of note must have visited the house in Spread Eagle Street of John Milton, the elder. Hence Lawes may have known the poet in his boyhood. Milton's sonnet shows that the connection between them was very close. To this friendship we are indebted for *Arcades* and *Comus*.

Incompleteness of Arcades.

The former has little pretension to completeness. It represents the *disiecta membra* of a longer entertainment; or at best the very slender thread of narrative which held the incidents together. There would be dances[1] of the courtly guise recommended by the Attendant Spirit in *Comus*; picturesque grouping of the *dramatis personæ*; possibly some of the effective devices which Ben Jonson was wont to introduce, using machinery for the purpose; and a good deal of music. Many such trifles were given at the great houses of Jacobean nobles, to grace a wedding ceremony, to entertain the court on its royal progresses, to show an Italian ambassador that culture had crossed the Alps and reached the *toto divisos orbe Britannos*. But these were mostly ephemeral pieces, inspired by some special occasion, serving the occasion, and then forgotten. *Arcades* survives because for once an evening's amusement was married to immortal verse.

[1] *E.g.* after line 95.

COMUS.

Comus is so closely allied with *Arcades* that in speaking of the latter it has been necessary to anticipate. The main facts that bear upon the history of *Comus* are as follows.

Why written, and when.

The son-in-law of the Countess of Derby was created, as we said, Earl of Bridgewater in 1617. This was in return for the services rendered by his father as Lord Chancellor. Perhaps for the same reason the Earl enjoyed a very distinguished position under Charles I. Already a member of the Privy Council, he was made President of the Council of Wales on June 26, 1631. In the next month, July 8th, he became Lord Lieutenant of the Counties on the Welsh border and of North and South Wales—an office that gave him full military and civil jurisdiction in the district named. Though his election dated from the summer of 1631, he did not, it would seem, go to Wales at all until May 1633, and the formal entry upon his duties was delayed till the autumn of the next year. To celebrate that event great festivities were held at his official residence, Ludlow Castle. For this inauguration Milton's *Comus* was written. On Michaelmas Night, 1634, the first performance took place.

It may be assumed that Lawes being music-master of the Bridgewater family was asked to furnish a Masque, and that as a friend of Milton he applied to the latter for help. With the Puritan Milton of later years who in *Paradise Lost* IV. 764, decried "mixed dance or wanton mask," the petition would have fared ill. But at this time there could have been nothing distasteful in it. Milton showed himself in *L'Allegro* no less friendly to the stage than in *Il Penseroso* to the Church. In the latter the ritual of Anglicanism was celebrated with reverence: in the former "mask and antique pageantry" found a place among the legitimate delights that mirth might offer. Further, there was the desire to do a service to his friend Lawes.

Milton accepted the commission; and *Comus* was the outcome. Probably he wrote the piece early in 1634. It had to be ready by the autumn; Lawes would take some little time over the musical setting of the lyrics; and the performers would need to prepare the scenery, study their parts, and, in a word, complete the preliminary arrangements incidental to the representation of an unusually long Masque. The spring therefore of 1634 may be received with some confidence as the date of the composition of *Comus*. *Date of Comus.*

Whether the play was successful at its representation we do not know. Many of Lawes' friends evidently approved of it. Some were present in the Hall at Ludlow Castle on that September evening; others, perhaps, heard the songs afterwards sung by Lawes himself or his pupils. They realised that there was in England a poet of rare promise and exquisite performance. Copies of *Comus* were asked for; it became "much desired." At last to save himself the trouble of making these transcripts Lawes published an edition of *Comus*, probably from the MS. which had been used as the acting-version. This, the first edition of *Comus*, was issued in 1637. The title-page of the volume, a slim quarto of which the British Museum possesses several copies, runs as follows: *The first edition of Comus.*

"A Maske presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634, on Michaelmasse Night, before the Right Honourable John, Earle of Bridgewater, Viscount Brackley, Lord President of Wales, and one of his Majesties' most honourable Privy Counsell.

'*Eheu quid volui misero mihi! floribus Austrum*
Perditus—'

London: Printed for Humphrey Robinson, at the signe of the Three Pidgeons in Paul's Churchyard, 1637."

It will be observed that Milton's name is omitted. The motto, however[1], shows that his consent to the publication had

[1] From Vergil, *Eclogue*, II. 58—59. Cf. the lines from the seventh *Eclogue, 27, 28, which Milton placed on the title-page of the 1645 edition of his poems.*

been obtained: "Alas! what have I been about in my folly! On my flowers I have let in the scirocco, infatuate as I am." The last words imply that Milton had some doubts as to the expediency of printing the volume. Had Lawes issued the imprint against the wishes of Milton the motto chosen would have been pointless. That at least one competent and discerning critic was ready to welcome the new voice in English verse we may judge from Sir Henry Wotton's complimentary letter to Milton[1].

Later editions of Comus.

In 1645 and 1673 Milton published editions of his poems. *Comus*, of course, was printed in each. In neither, however, did he describe the poem by the name it has long borne. The title in the 1645 edition reads thus: "*A Mask of the Same Author, Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634, before the Earl of Bridgewater, then President of Wales: Anno Dom.* 1645." The title of the later edition is almost identical. A more definite designation being desirable, the Masque was named *Comus* after its chief character. When, or by whom, this was done the editors do not state. The earliest separate edition I know that has on its title-page the name *Comus*, is one published at Glasgow in 1745; but others may have preceded.

The Text.

The basis of the text of *Comus* is supplied by the three above-mentioned editions—that of Lawes, 1637, and those of Milton, 1645 and 1673. There is also Milton's original draft of the poem among the MSS. at Cambridge; and the Bridgewater manuscript, supposed to be the stage-copy from which the actors learned their parts and believed by Todd to be in Lawes' handwriting, survives. All the differences between these five authorities—on the whole, not inconsiderable differences—we have not attempted to record. A full textual *apparatus criticus* could have no place in this volume; but some of the more interesting variations are noticed. Editors of Milton owe much in this matter to the careful collation made by Todd. Perhaps the last of the *editions published* during Milton's life has the most weight. It

[1] *It will be found prefixed to the text of Comus.*

gives us *Comus*, not as the Masque originally left Milton's hands—for that we must turn to the Cambridge MS.—but in the finally revised form which he wished it to assume. There is a single passage where one is fain to believe that the Trinity manuscript is right, and the printed copies wrong. This is line 553.

Such, in brief, is the external history of *Comus*. Something must be said about the poem itself—the sources from which Milton drew, the undercurrent of idea that runs throughout, the dramatic value of the Masque, its ethical and literary qualities.

In lines 43—45 the Attendant Spirit says:

The sources of Comus.

> "I will tell you now
> What never yet was heard in tale or song,
> From old or modern bard, in hall or bower."

This claim to absolute originality must not be pressed. For a good deal in *Comus* Milton was indebted to previous writers. We shall best be able to estimate that debt if we split up the Masque into its chief component parts.

There is (i) the main story: that of the sister lost in a wood, entrapped by a magician, and rescued by her brothers; with the attendant incidents. This Milton owed, beyond doubt, to the *Old Wives' Tale* (1595) of George Peele, the Elizabethan poet (1558—1598). Warton in his edition of *Milton's Poems upon Several Occasions* (1791) summarised thus the points of contact between *Comus* and the *Old Wives' Tale*: "This very scarce[1] and curious piece (i.e. Peele's play) exhibits, among other parallel incidents, two Brothers wandering in quest of their Sister, whom an Enchanter had imprisoned. The Magician had learned his art from his mother Meroe, as Comus had been instructed by his mother Circe. The Brothers call out the Lady's name, and Echo replies[2]. The Enchanter had given her a potion which suspends

Milton's debt to George Peele (1558—1595).

[1] Since then (1791) the two editions of Peele by Dyce and Bullen respectively have been published.

[2] *In Comus it is the* Lady who invokes the Echo.

the power of reason, and superinduces oblivion of herself. The Brothers afterwards meet with an Old Man, who is also skilled in magic; and by listening to his soothsayings, they recover their lost Sister. But not till the Enchanter's wreath has been torn from his head, his sword wrested from his hand, a glass broken, and a light extinguished."

Warton's abstract of the *Old Wives' Tale* somewhat accentuates the resemblance. It does not strike us quite so forcibly when we read Peele's work. Still the similarity is there, and cannot be explained away. That Peele was a writer whom Milton had studied (Milton studied everything, and the author of *The Arraignment of Paris* is eminently worth reading in spite of Charles Lamb) can be shown from his prose tract the *Animadversions upon the Remonstrant's Defence against Smectymnus* (1641). When so reliable a critic as Mr Saintsbury, wholly hostile to fanciful attempts to convict one writer of plagiarism from another, says[1]: "The *Old Wives' Tale* pretty certainly furnished Milton with the subject of *Comus*"; we may be content to allow that Milton was not free from obligation to George Peele.

The traditional account of the origin of Comus.

The popular tradition as to the genesis of *Comus*, related by Oldys and still extant, must also be mentioned, as some good scholars have thought well to endorse it, notably Sir Egerton Brydges, one of the ablest and most sympathetic of Milton's editors. This was to the effect that Lady Alice Egerton and her two brothers, Viscount Brackley and Mr Thomas Egerton, were actually overtaken by nightfall in Haywood forest near Ludlow: they were returning to the castle from a visit to their relatives, the Egertons, in Herefordshire; and the sister was separated from her brothers. If this ever took place and news of it reached Milton's ears, then he simply dramatised the episode; though part of his debt to Peele, the introduction of the magician, would still remain. But it is far more probable that the legend, which dates from the last century, grew out of the Masque than *vice versa*. The *story deserves, I think*, but little attention or credence.

[1] *Elizabethan Literature*, p. 71.

(ii) The protagonist of the piece, Comus, introduces another element in the story. He is in all essentials the creation of Milton. In classical Greek κῶμος signifies no more than 'revel' or 'revelling-band.' The personification Comus, i.e. pleasure raised to the dignity of a deity, is a post-classical conception, known only to later mythology. Apparently he is first mentioned in the *Imagines* of Philostratus the elder, who lived in the third century A.D. Philostratus describes a fresco in which Comus is represented, but the account is too slight to have been of much service to Milton, even if he was familiar with it[1]. More definite is the picture drawn by Ben Jonson in the Masque of *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*, (1619). Comus is there apostrophised as

The character of Comus, the magician.

> "The founder of taste
> For fresh meats, or powdered, or pickle, or paste;
> Devourer of boiled, baked, roasted or sod;
> An emptier of cups."

Obviously this sordid power of dull, "lust-dieted" appetite has little in common with Milton's blithe, caressing personification of pleasure, so fatal because outwardly so beautiful; and the notion that Milton borrowed his hero from the great Jacobean Masque-writer may be dismissed.

There is, however, a certain Latin play which may have given suggestions and which from its title deserves to be mentioned. It was called *Comus*. It was written by a Dutchman, Hendrik van der Putten (who is better known under the name of Erycius Puteanus) sometime professor at Louvain. First printed in 1608, his *Comus* was reissued at Oxford in 1634, a remarkable coincidence. The Comus of Puteanus is a much subtler embodiment of sensual hedonism than the cup-quaffing deity of Ben Jonson; he approximates more to the graceful reveller and enticing magician of Milton,

The Latin Play, Comus.

[1] The painting of which Philostratus speaks represents Comus just after a carousal: καὶ ὁ Κῶμος ἥκει, νέος παρὰ νέους, ἁπαλὸς καὶ οὔπω ἔφηβος, ἐρυθρὸς ὑπὸ οἴνου, καὶ καθεύδων ὀρθὸς ὑπὸ τοῦ μεθύειν, Imagines, *bk. I. ch. 2, Welcker's* ed. (1825), p. 6.

and may have supplied a chance hint. At least the parallel passages which Todd brought together tend to show that Milton had read the work of the Dutch professor. Two or three noticeable parallels occur in the first speech of Comus 93—134; and again in the scene where he tempts the Lady 706—55[1]. I should be loth to acquit Milton of all indebtedness to Puteanus. I think that he must have gone through the Latin piece, picking out from the worthless slag an occasional atom of genuine ore.

Milton's use of the legend of Circe.

(iii) The third strand in the material out of which *Comus* is woven is the Circe-myth. In describing the supernatural powers of Comus Milton transfers to the wizard the classical attributes of his mother Circe. Like Vergil and Ovid before him he lays the *Odyssey* under large contribution. Here, however, Spenser had anticipated Milton; cf. the account of the enchantress Acrasia in the *Faerie Queene*, ii. 12, 50 *et seq.* Browne, too, had made the adventure of Odysseus and his crew at the island of Circe the theme of *The Inner Temple Masque*, (1614). Giles Fletcher had gone to the same source of information and inspiration in *Christ's Victorie on Earth.* Giles Fletcher, like his brother, imitated Spenser: each is strongly penetrated with what Mr Saintsbury calls "the Cambridge flavour," one having been a member of Trinity College, the other of King's: and the influence of each on Milton is manifest in his early works. Hence the description of the Lady Pangloretta and her Palace of Vain Delight (*Christ's Victorie*, 49) may have been in Milton's mind when he worked into his poem such parts of the Circe-story as suited his purpose. That this is true of the above-mentioned stanzas of the *Faerie Queene* appears to me patent; and *The Inner Temple Masque* is a work at least worth studying in connection with *Comus.* They have several points of possibly accidental resemblance[2]. It is not of course to be inferred that Milton deliberately transferred to *Comus* what

[1] One of these coincidences is pointed out in the note on line 755.

[2] With Browne's best known poem, *Britannia's Pastorals* (1613), Milton was most certainly familiar.

others had written; we merely imply that he had read two of these poems, if not all three, just as he had read the *Odyssey;* and that when he came to traverse the same ground the various influences made themselves felt, determining the choice of a phrase, the addition of a descriptive detail, and so forth. It is all part of the lampadephoria of literature.

The Story of Sabrina. Milton's indebtedness to Fletcher.

(iv) There remains the legend of the river-goddess Sabrina whose intervention frees the imprisoned lady and brings the Masque to a happy close. Here—and it is a very important part of *Comus*—the influence of Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*[1] is unmistakeable. This beautiful pastoral was composed before 1625, the year of Fletcher's death. It had been acted as a Court-drama; representations were given in the London theatres in 1633 and 1634. The motive of the play is identical with that of *Comus*, viz. the strength of purity; and in Fletcher's heroine must be recognised an elder sister of Milton's Sabrina. Speaking briefly we may say that the last two hundred lines of *Comus*—the disenchantment scene—betray in the conception of the nymph Sabrina, in the incidents, and the lyric movement, the spell which Fletcher's genius exercised on Milton. Milton chose the story of the goddess who swayed the Severn stream in compliment to his audience. It suited the scene and the setting of his Masque; and his treatment of the theme reflects, in no servile spirit of imitation, the graceful example of the poet who a generation before had been the pride of Milton's University.

Some editors ignore or deny this. Bent upon proving Milton's independence they seek at every turn to minimise his obligations. It may be doubted, however, whether much is gained by shirking facts. I believe that in the points enumerated Milton owed something to Peele, something to Spenser, and more to Fletcher. To admit this does the poet no disservice. The great artists have themselves set little store on mere originality; and it might be contended without any

[1] Beaumont, the *alter ego* of the famous partnership, whose judgment *(in Pope's line)* "check'd what Fletcher writ," had no hand in *the piece.*

desperate paradox that a writer never demonstrates his possession of genius more effectively than when he takes the work of an inferior craftsman and tunes it to finer issues.

The ethics of plagiarism are simple: if a writer borrows and fails to infuse new life and new charm into that which he has borrowed he stands condemned: but when the true creative artist seizes on seemingly worthless material and passing it through the alembic of his genius enriches literature with the gems of consummate achievement, or when a great poet like Milton openly conveys a suggestion from a dramatist like Fletcher who had doubtless done the same thing by others, we should be slow to upbraid. Literature is a series of echoes, and only two considerations concern us: has the artist added things new? and into the things old has he breathed the breath of fresh suggestion? If his record is clear on both counts, it is sufficient. Judged by this test Milton has nothing to fear. He borrowed from Peele, and the prosaic *Old Wives' Tale* was made to render a result of incomparable beauty: he borrowed from Fletcher, and at his touch the grace and wonder at the least of the *Faithful Shepherdess*, did *not* yield. After we have told the tale of his debts our sense of his genius is quickened and increased.

Johnson's criticism of Comus.

One of the most unfortunate and disastrous pieces of criticism ever written is Johnson's *Life* of Milton. It eclipsed in unsympathetic dryness even the jejune notice of Gray, and compassed in a comparatively brief space literary misdemeanours which will always rise up against Johnson's reputation. These perverse pronouncements upon *Comus*, and *Lycidas*, and *Paradise Lost*, are the Ixion-wheel to which with pathetic and suicidal infelicity Johnson bound himself; so wholly regrettable, not because they inflict a jot of harm on Milton who is beyond the range of cavilling acrimony, but because they do so much to obscure the greatness of a fine critic. This Johnson was; and no one can suppose that the *Life* in question is in the *least degree* representative of his critical faculty. When a *writer finds (no* doubt Johnson did find, since his honesty is

unimpeachable) the songs in *Comus* "harsh" and "not very musical," the manner of *Lycidas* "easy, vulgar and therefore disgusting," we may reasonably arrive at one of two conclusions: either he is biassed, perhaps unconsciously; or his sensibility towards certain exquisite types of verse is *nil.* In this case the former conclusion must be accepted. For reasons religious and political Johnson approached Milton's poetry with distinct *parti pris.* Milton was identified with the lost cause of Puritanism. Eighteenth century common sense dismissed all forms of religious enthusiasm as phases of insanity[1]. That was one reason why Johnson could never be a fair critic of the poet of Puritanism. Milton was the pride of English Liberalism, and Toryism found its champion in Johnson: hence political antagonism supplied the second motive of the latter's prejudice. Johnson, therefore, set to work (without knowing it) to decry Milton, forgetful of Bentley's excellent maxim that no man is written down save by himself, and the anathemas thus recklessly launched very soon came home to roost. They serve to emphasise the extreme fallibility of criticism: they are also useful as supplying a convenient peg whereon to hang some remarks upon Milton's poems.

Comus as a drama.

For instance, Johnson considered *Comus* "deficient as a drama:" it lacks, he said, probability. Editors more friendly to Milton have echoed the charge. But is it quite just? Criticism of *Comus* must keep in view the central fact that it is a Masque—not comedy, not tragedy, nor a compromise between them such as Shakespeare first brought to perfection; but a Masque, as the title-page proclaimed. Hence strict and exacting canons of dramatic art which should be applied if the work under discussion were *Hamlet*, or *Le Misanthrope*, or *The Way of the World*—to take acknowledged masterpieces in different styles—have here no bearing. In a Masque we do not look for accurate and consistent characterisation, for logical development of dramatic motive, for the

[1] Witness Gibbon's treatment of Christianity in the famous chapters of the *Decline and Fall*, or Robertson's scornful allusions to the *Crusades*.

balance and interplay of interest, the variety and consecutiveness of action which in a drama proper are indispensable. These things lie outside the province of the Masque-writer whose fancy plays unfettered in a land where truth and realism have seldom set foot, and never felt at home. Consequently *Comus* should not be contrasted with works that belong to a wholly separate sphere of art. It must be placed side by side with, say, Shirley's *Triumph of Peace*, or Carew's *Cœlum Britannicum*. Before we condemn it on the score of improbability we should read what Ben Jonson and Fletcher, the ablest of professional Masque-writers, have left us of a like description.

If we accord Milton the license which the composers of such pieces habitually claimed and exercised, and judge *Comus* by the elementary standard of dramatic propriety recognised in these entertainments, the play comes, I cannot help thinking, exceeding well out of the test. Taken simply as a drama, without any reference whatsoever to the beauty of the lyrics or the moral elevation of the serious, philosophic parts, *Comus* is superior to nine-tenths of the Masque-literature of the XVIIth century. Milton has a clear simple story: he tells it in a direct, coherent style.

Obviously he enjoys one signal advantage over the ordinary Masque-writer. He works on his own lines. There is no need to consider the taste of the scene-painter. In *Comus* the poet comes first; the musician, the master of the revels, the designer of the *mise-en-scène* fill subordinate parts. Often it was otherwise. We frequently find that the poetry of a Masque has been made a minor matter, degraded, as Ben Jonson and Shirley bitterly complained, to a position of subservience to the ruling passion for luxurious ostentation; only the external splendour of the performance has been considered—the architectural wonders that prove the skill of Inigo Jones, the mechanical devices by which the scene may be metamorphosed in a moment, the dazzling brilliance of dress. Poetic interest is killed by the weight of decoration, and the Masque becomes a play without words. The latter barely serve to connect the

series of scenes; they are often as devoid of merit, literary or dramatic, as the *libretto* of a modern opera.

Milton was saved from this indignity. To have written a Masque or anything else on such terms would have been an act of treason to his genius. When he composed the entertainment for which Lawes asked him he wrote with a free hand, developing his story in his own fashion; and as a necessary result he produced in *Comus* a piece of work which, unassailable as literature, compares from the dramatic standpoint not unfavourably with Ben Jonson's best writing. More could not be said: to say as much seems to me bare justice. We should remember, too, that some of the lengthy speeches in *Comus* which belong rather to the study than the stage (for example, the dissertation on purity, lines 779—806) were not spoken at the original performance of the Masque. Their omission must have lightened it considerably.

The stage-history of Comus.

To these remarks upon the dramatic effectiveness of *Comus* may be added a word upon its stage-history[1]. The representation at Ludlow appears to be the only one that took place during the seventeenth century. A hundred years later most of Milton's poems were made to supply *libretti* for contemporary musicians[2]. After Pope had rejected Atterbury's proposal to adapt *Samson Agonistes* for the stage, Handel used that epic as the basis of his Oratorio (1742). He had previously set to music *L' Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* (1740). *Comus*[3] fell to the skilful hands of Dr Arne, and was

[1] The bibliographical appendix to Dr Garnett's *Life of Milton* has furnished some of the details in this paragraph.

[2] Lawes' music is now in the British Museum (Add. MSS. 11, 518). There are five numbers, viz. "From the heavens," "Sweet Echo," "Sabrina Fair," "Back, Shepherds," and "Now my task." These (with the exception of "Sweet Echo") are also printed in Dr Rimbault's *Ancient Vocal Music of England*, no. 8.

[3] The adaptation of the Masque was made by the Rev. John Dalton, afterwards Canon of Worcester. He altered *Comus* beyond recognition, dividing it *into three acts*, redistributing the speeches, introducing fresh *characters (among them Lycidas)* and scenes, and interpolating songs of

acted in an adapted form at Drury Lane in 1738. Another arrangement[1] of the Masque was made by George Colman, who, retaining Arne's music, produced it at Covent Garden in 1772. Of this a revised edition was played at the same theatre in 1815. It was also published, 1815. The British Museum copy contains the autograph of Sir Henry Bishop, who composed additional airs for the performance[2]. The last notable rendering of the Masque was that produced under the management of Macready[3].

Comus as a Poem: its Lyrics.

Johnson had fault to find with the songs in *Comus*. This was curious, because the superlative excellence of Milton's lyrics has never been a matter of dispute. In his early poems Milton achieves a style of quintessential beauty, reminding us with Wordsworth that poetry is primarily a matter of inspiration, and proving, like Gray, that it must also be a matter of art. Each verse has the requisite ring of spontaneity, yet each is touched with the studied beauty that belongs to poetry alone, the grace that dwells apart from prose and the commerce of the crowd. Richness of imagery,

his own composition, which Todd considered to be written "with much elegance and taste." The most curious change occurs in Act III., which commences with twenty-six lines taken from *L'Allegro*, the invocation to Mirth ("Come, thou goddess," line 11) being followed by the appearance on the scene of Euphrosyne. Arne's music is bound up in the volume belonging to the British Museum that contains Lawes' five songs for *Comus*. The music is in MS., save only the setting of the interpolated passage from *L'Allegro*. This is given in print, being, in fact, an extract from Handel's setting of *L'Allegro*, from which we may infer that Arne's version of this particular portion of *Comus* was cancelled in favour of Handel's. The stage-version was frequently acted (see *Geneste*, III. 533—34, IV. 74, and elsewhere), and several times printed. On the title-page of the first imprint (1738) are the words "never presented but on Michaelmas Day, 1634."

[1] Much briefer than the previous version; the Masque was compressed into two acts. It was "acted several times" (*Geneste*, v. 360).

[2] *Grove's Dict. of Music*, article on Sir Henry Bishop.

[3] *Diaries*, vol. II. pp. 205, 206.

epithets that (in Macaulay's words) supply "a text for a canto," single phrases that for their curious felicity are, as Archbishop Trench said, "poems in miniature," evanescent touches that recall to the classical reader the old and happy, far-off things of Athens and Rome—these qualities that belong mainly to art, are held together and heightened by a perfect genuineness of emotion which is the outcome of sheer inspiration. Above all, Milton gives us what we require most in lyric verse—true, unerring melody, and those who are deaf to these sphere-born notes, who, with Johnson, find the 'numbers' of *Comus* unpleasing, must be left to their displeasure.

Apart from their intrinsic beauty the songs gain very considerably from their position, forming, as they do, a kind of lyric *cadenza* on which the Masque closes. It is as if, after bearing the heat and burden of the piece, after enforcing with all the power of his eloquence and righteous enthusiasm the moral which *Comus* was composed to illustrate, Milton turned to his muse and said *paulo minora canamus*. The philosophic strain was dropped: the poet of *L'Allegro* reasserted himself; and *Comus* came to an end with the notes of Lawes' music ringing through the Hall.

The Moral of Comus: why the Masque is an Allegory.

It would be interesting to know what were the criticisms passed upon the piece as the assembly separated. Did the noble guests of the Earl of Bridgewater take the poet's meaning, or had they entertained a prophet unawares? Perhaps some present felt that this was a Masque not quite like any they had seen in the great banquet-room at Whitehall or the lawyer's Inns of Court; an entertainment through which amid all the scenic brilliance ran an undercurrent of deep, philosophic earnestness. For once in its history the frivolous, fanciful Masque, dedicated to the idle purposes of wealth and fashion, had been made the instrument whereby a great teacher conveyed a great lesson, the doctrine nearest to his heart—namely, sobriety of life. There was nothing for which Milton cared more than this. Hence the atmosphere of rare purity in his works, the sustained elevation of thought diffused throughout everything he wrote.

Milton has a strongly-marked strain of asceticism. He praises more than once the "cloistered virtue" of rigid abstinence. He shows an extraordinarily nice sense of what things are fair and of good report; and when he speaks of purity it is often in the language, and always in the spirit, of Saint Paul. "The sublime notion and high mystery" of a disciplined life is, as Masson says, "*the* Miltonic idea," illustrated by passage after passage alike in the poems and prose works, but nowhere more conspicuous than in *Comus*.

The Puritans and the Cavaliers.

Under any circumstances the theme would have kindled his muse to rapt eloquence. But now in the year 1634, when the people was slowly separating into hostile camps, the truth was no longer of merely personal import—it had become vitalised with a tragic national intensity. Each day the conflict between the gloom and ungraciousness of Puritanism and the pleasure-seeking carelessness of the Cavalier world grew keener. Extremes produce extremes: for one half of the nation life meant pleasure: the other half identified pleasure with sin. When *Comus* was written Milton stood between the two armies. His nature was not yet sicklied o'er with the pale cast of Calvinism. The life of ideal happiness as pictured in *L'Allegro* is one into which enter all the influences of culture and nature that bring in their train "the joy in widest commonalty spread;" the cheerfulness which should be synonymous with Life, and to which Art should minister[1]. And when in *Il Penseroso* Milton celebrates divinest Melancholy, she is not the bitter power whom Dante punished with the pains of Purgatory; rather, she has something of the kindliness that Shakespeare attributes to his goddess Adversity, whose uses are sweet, and of whom it was happily said[2] that she must be a fourth Grace, less known than the classic Three, but still their sister.

These poems, *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso* and *Comus*, belong to the non-political period in Milton's life. The bare fact that he

[1] *Mr Coventry* Patmore's fifth essay in the critical collection *Principle in Art* puts this point very clearly.

[2] *Guesses at Truth.*

wrote the last showed[1] that he had not yet gone over to help the party whose unreasoning hatred of all amusement had flashed out in Prynne's *Histriomastix*[2] (1633). On the other hand, the whole tone of *Comus* was opposed to the hedonistic indifferentism of the Cavaliers. It rebuked the quest of mere pleasure. The revel-god personified the worst elements of court-life. In his overthrow Milton allegorically foreshadowed the downfall of those who led that life; just as in *Lycidas*, under the guise of pastoral symbolism, he predicted the ruin of the Anglican Church, and at the end of his life lamented the crash of Puritanism through the mouth of Samson Agonistes. Two hundred and fifty years ago therefore *Comus* was terribly real as a warning against the danger upon which the ship of national life was drifting. But the theme is true yesterday, to-day and for ever; and the art with which it is set off remains undimmed, the wisdom unfading.

The Verse of Comus.

Analysis of the metre of any English poem is not easy. Over blank verse in particular arises much dispute, not least over the blank verse of Milton. A few notes, however, on the metre, or metres, of *Comus* may be useful. Metrically the poem has this great interest; it is the first in which Milton uses blank verse, and unlike Shakespeare whose style was continually developing so that the metre of the *Tempest* is poles apart from that of *The Two Gentlemen*, Milton struck out from the very first an exquisite type of blank verse and kept to it. Organically the verse of *Comus* is identical with that of *Paradise Lost*. Johnson noted this, and as we have quoted some of his least felicitous *dicta* upon *Comus* it is fair to reproduce the very just remark with which his criticism of the Masque commenced. He said: "The greatest of Milton's

[1] Cf. Green's remark, "The historic interest of Milton's *Comus* lies in its forming part of a protest made by the more cultured Puritans against the gloomier bigotry which persecution was fostering in the party at large," *History of English People*, III. p. 166.

[2] Prynne often refers to Masques, and always in terms of scorn; e.g. on *page 783 of the Histriomastix*, "Stage-players, Mūmeries, Masques, *and such like heathenish* practises," 1633 edn.

juvenile performances is the *Mask of Comus*, in which may very plainly be discovered the dawn or twilight of *Paradise Lost*. He appears to have formed very early that system of diction and mode of verse which his maturer judgment approved, and from which he never endeavoured nor desired to deviate." Mr Saintsbury endorses Johnson's remark and we may take it to be substantially correct.

The distinguishing characteristic of Milton's blank verse is his use of what Professor Masson calls "the free musical paragraph"— a verse-system, that is, "in which the mechanism is elastic, or determined from moment to moment by the swell or shrinking of the meaning or feeling[1]". Mr Saintsbury writes to the same effect when he finds the secret of Milton's pre-eminence in the skill with which the poet builds "what may be called the verse-paragraph[2]." Blank verse, he points out, is exposed to two dangers: it may be formal and stiff by being arranged in single lines or couplets; or diffuse and amorphous through lack of internal coherence and balance. In its earlier stages the metre suffered from the former tendency. It either closed with a strong pause at the end of every line, or just struggled to the climax of the couplet. Further than the end of the couplet it never extended until Marlowe[3] took the "drumming decasyllabon" into his hands, broke up the tyranny of the couplet-form, and by the process of overflow carried on the rhythm from verse to verse as the sense required. He was the first English poet who wrote blank verse of an unhampered type, verse in which we get variety of pause and cadence and beat as a substitute for

Earlier types of Blank Verse.

[1] *Essay on Milton's Versification.* As a matter of fact, Professor Masson is speaking of *Lycidas;* he refers to the occurrence throughout that poem of irregular lengths of metre, alternations of short and long lines to fit the changing emotions of the writer. But the phrase "free musical paragraph" is exactly applicable to Milton's blank verse.

[2] *Elizabethan Literature*, p. 327.

[3] *A very full study* of Marlowe's influence on the growth of dramatic *blank verse will be* found in Mr Symonds' *Shakspere's* Predecessors, pp. *583—603.*

rhyme. Following on Marlowe Shakespeare developed the measure as a dramatic instrument. Milton entered on the heritage which Shakespeare bequeathed and carried blank verse to its highest pitch of perfection as a narrative form.

Peculiar excellence of Milton's Blank Verse.

Briefly, that perfection lies herein: if we analyse a page of *Paradise Lost* we find that what the poet has to say is conveyed, not in single lines, nor in rigid couplets—but in flexible combinations of verses, which wait upon his meaning, which, therefore, do not twist or strain the sense, and which are regulated by an internal concent and harmony as subtly balanced as a chorus of Sophocles. Milton formulated his theory of blank verse in the preface to *Paradise Lost*. It amounted to no more than what he had practised years before in *Comus*. The system may be more elaborate in the later poem; but the radical identity of the metres of Masque and epic in this the salient quality of Milton's verse deserves notice.

Verses with the extra syllable.

On the other hand, a technical variation of some importance has to be mentioned, to wit, the prevalence in *Comus* of an extra syllable at the close of a verse. The eighth line in *Comus* belongs to the extra-syllabled type:

"Strive to keep up a frail and feverish be*ing*."

Here the italicised syllable is superfluous. The percentage of verses in which this metrical license occurs is large in *Comus*—still larger in *Samson Agonistes*—but small (as Coleridge, I believe, first pointed out) in *Paradise Lost*. According to Professor Masson, the percentages read as follows: in *Comus* 9, in *Paradise Lost* 1 (about), the rate being higher in other books: in *Samson Agonistes* 6: in *Paradise Regained* 3—4. The growth of the extra-syllable variety is very perceptible in Shakespeare[1]; and we can readily understand why the blank

[1] It constitutes indeed one of the most important of the metrical tests. Thus Dr Furnivall takes 23 lines from the *Comedy of Errors*; 24 from *Henry VIII*. In the extract from the latter there are 8 lines with the *supernumerary syllable*; in the extract from the early play not one.

verse measure took this turn. The extra syllable exactly suits the spoken verse of the stage. It runs on into the next line, knitting a passage together with a rapid continuity of movement akin to the naturalness of ordinary conversation. Hence its popularity with playwrights, whose example Milton rightly followed in his dramatic pieces *Comus* and *Samson Agonistes*. But epic narrative demands a statelier, slower march, and in *Paradise Lost* the superfluous final syllable was sparingly employed.

Apparent Alexandrines.

Another point in the blank verse of *Comus*, closely connected with what we have just been saying, is the occurrence of lines which look like Alexandrines. An Alexandrine must show six distinct beats. There is, I think, only one verse in *Comus* that agrees strictly with the Alexandrine form; viz. line 243:

"And give resounding grace to all Heaven's harmonies."

This is the concluding line of the first song. It has six clearly defined feet; Milton obviously intended it to form a progressive *crescendo* to the invocation. Other verses which, superficially judged, might be taken as Alexandrines are 192, 617 and 763. These should be ranged under the class entitled by Dr Abbott "apparent Alexandrines." They contain twelve syllables, but the twelve syllables fail to give six beats; consequently the lines are not Alexandrines and must be explained on some other principle. Thus line 763 runs:

"Is now the labour of my thoughts: 'tis likeliest."

Here the scansion ends with '*like*-liest,' the verse being composed of five iambic feet rounded off with a *double* supernumerary syllable—'like-*liest*.' Line 617 is more difficult; but the break in the middle is probably responsible for the seeming irregularity.

Cæsura.

Since Milton lays great stress upon the internal economy of his blank verse paragraphs, much must depend on the rest or pause which in English prosody may be

It was largely on the result of his application of this test to *Henry VIII.* *that Mr Spedding* assigned to their respective authors—Shakespeare *and Fletcher—the* different parts of the play.

treated as the equivalent of the classical *cæsura*. Milton's favourite rest would seem to be after the third foot; e.g.

> "And took in strains that might create a soul
> Under the ribs of Death." ||

If the speech of Thyrsis, 520—580, is studied it will be found that the pause comes some seventeen times or more in the part of the verse indicated above.

These are the most noteworthy features in the blank verse of *Comus*—its paragraph-arrangement, numerous instances of the extra-syllabled line, pseudo-Alexandrines and frequent cæsura after the third foot.

The lyrics are simple in structure, cast for the most part in the octosyllabic measure much affected by Ben Jonson and easily set as musical recitative. They show that Milton exercised very freely the right of using imperfect rhymes. As proof of this Professor Masson aptly refers to the Echo Song. It has fourteen lines, with four consecutive pairs of irregular rhyme; and it is none the less wholly beautiful.

Imperfect rhyme.

THE ENGLISH MASQUE.

In the last years of the sixteenth century England owed much to Italian culture. For the age of Spenser Italy was what France a hundred years afterwards became for the age of Dryden, the great authority and court of appeal upon things artistic. It was from Italy that the Masque came. Hall tells us in the passage from his *Chronicle* quoted later on that the entertainment which struck people as so novel in 1512 was introduced "after the manner of Italie." In the *Records of the* Revels subsequent to this date (1512) occur the words *maskelyn* and *masculers*, corruptions of the

Italian origin of the Masque.

Italian *Maschera* and *Mascherati*[1]. Marlowe puts these lines into the mouth of Piers Gaveston, the favourite of Edward II.:

> "I must have wanton poets, pleasant wits,
> Musicians, that with touching of a string,
> May draw the pliant king which way I please:
> Music and poetry is his delight;
> Therefore I'll have Italian masks by night,
> Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows."
>
> *Edward II.* i. 1.

Ben Jonson, again, in the introductory note to the *Masque of Hymen*, replying to the objection that his Masques are overladen with learning, writes: "And howsoever some may squeamishly cry out, that all endeavour of learning and sharpness in these transitory devices, especially where it steps beyond their little or (let me not wrong them) no brain at all, is superfluous: I am contented, these fastidious stomachs should leave my full tables, and enjoy at home their clean empty trenchers, fittest for such airy tastes; where perhaps a few Italian herbs, picked up and made into a salad, may find sweeter acceptance than all the most nourishing and sound meats of the world." So much therefore is clear: the Masque was borrowed from Italy[2].

[1] *Shakspere's Predecessors*, p. 320. Mr Symonds gives an extremely interesting sketch of the history of the Masque, pp. 317—362. The word *Masque* is derived from the Arabic *maskharat*="a buffoon, jester, man in masquerade, a pleasantry, anything ridiculous" (Skeat). In Italian we have *maschera*, *mascherone*, and *mascherata*. The English spelling with a *k*, determined, presumably, by the Italian *ch*, appears to be earlier than the duplicate form *Masque*. For the latter cf. the French *masque*, *masquerade*. France, like England, borrowed it among the numerous Italian words imported during the Italian wars of the early years of the XVIth century. Many of them were names of games.

[2] Mr Fleay thinks that the Court-Masques in Elizabeth's reign were rendered by Italian players. He notes that Italians "made pastime" for the Queen in 1574; that the Records of the Revels mention an Italian interpreter; and that the speeches of a Masque played before *Elizabeth in 1579* were translated from English into Italian, at the *Lord Chamberlain's* direction,—*Chronicle History of the Stage*, pp. *22, 26.*

Of the Masque as it was under James I. and Charles we can speak with certainty, the detailed descriptions added to their *Entertainments* by Ben Jonson and his contemporaries enabling us to follow the performance of a piece as closely and clearly as we might that of a modern drama from the review of a competent critic. With the Masque as practised during the sixteenth century the case is different. References to it, or allusions to festivities at which Masques were performed, are not infrequent; but full accounts such as we afterwards get are wanting. It is fair, however, to assume that the Masque after its importation into this country kept to its old Italian lines: knowledge therefore of what a Masque meant in Italy will help us to form an idea of what it was in England.

The Masque in Italy: the Masquerade and the Pageant.

There appear to have been two Italian forms of entertainment to which the description 'Masque' was applicable: the private Masquerade, and the public Pageant. In each masques or vizards were worn. The union of these entertainments produced the English Masque of Ben Jonson: not, that is, the English Masque as it was rendered in its earlier stages, but as it eventually took form in its great period from 1603—1634[1]. Practically the amalgamation of Masquerade and Pageant had been previously effected in Italy. Let us consider for a moment the former.

Burckhardt[2] and Mr Symonds describe (on the authority of the Venetian Diary of Sanudo) the festivities which followed the marriage of Lucrezia Borgia with Alfonso d'Este at Ferrara in 1502. Amongst the amusements provided were five comedies of Plautus which were performed on five successive nights. Between the scenes were interpolated what we might call allegorical Ballets: a number of players came on the scene, dressed in allegorical costumes to represent allegorical characters, executed elaborate dances and rhythmic movements to the

[1] That is, from the accession of James to the date of the composition of *Comus*. Roughly speaking, this was the time when the Masque flourished best. *See*, however, p. lxxii.

[2] *Civilisation of the Renascence*, English Version, p. 317 et seq.

sound of music, and sang madrigals. This was the Masque in its embryonic state.

Again, Mr Symonds relates the performance of a comedy played at Urbino in 1513. Like the Plautine comedies on the other occasion it was furnished with Masque-interludes, one after each act. The second of these was a "Masque of Venus, drawn along in her car by a couple of doves, and surrounded by a bevy of Cupids tossing flame from lighted tapers. They set fire to a door, out of which there leaped eight gallant fellows, all in flames, careering round the stage in a fantastic figure. The third was a Masque of Neptune. His chariot was drawn by sea-horses, with eight huge monsters of the deep surrounding it, and gambolling grotesquely to the sound of music. The fourth was a Masque of Juno, seated on a fiery car, drawn by peacocks....When the comedy ended, Love entered and explained the allegory of the interludes in a concluding epilogue. The whole performance terminated with a piece of concerted music from behind the scenes, 'the invisible music of four viols accompanying as many voices, who sang to a beautiful air a stanza of invocation' to Love[1]." These extracts throw some light on the Masquerade. The noticeable points are the use of Chariots, for this supplies a connecting link with the Pageant; the classical nature of the subjects; the allegorical treatment; the music; the dancing. The last is the central motive, the *point d'appui* of the performance, which, we see, is extremely composite, the literary element being confined to a few songs. Entertainments of this kind were given in private houses by great nobles and their friends. The players wore masques, so that there was not much scope for acting. Stress evidently was laid on the dresses and scenic arrangements. But the performances involved little or nothing beyond the compass of clever amateurs, desirous of rounding off a grand banquet with some pretty *tableaux*.

There was another species of representation in which *masques were* used; namely, the Pageant or out-of-door

[1] *Shakspere's Predecessors*, p. 324.

Procession. Originally the Procession had been religious in manner and matter, forming, in fact, part of the *Sacre Rappresentazioni* associated with the Feast of the Epiphany. But just as the English sacred plays had developed, or degenerated, into secular entertainments which in process of evolution ended in the regular drama, so these Italian ecclesiastical displays slowly assumed a purely mundane nature. The liturgical Procession, originated and sanctioned by the Church, became in Burckhardt's[1] words "the Florentine *Trionfi* or train of masked figures on foot and in chariots, the ecclesiastical character of which gradually gave way to the secular." Florence was especially famous for these shows; Florentines travelled throughout Italy to superintend them[2]. They were entirely spectacular. Immense chariots, crowded with fancifully dressed figures, classical gods and goddesses and the like, passed through the streets. There were elaborate erections of scaffolding to represent scenes from classical mythology. Trains of attendants marched in procession. Such was the Pageant, an open-air celebration appropriate in a land where out-of-door performances are favoured by a friendly sky. It gave great scope to the Italian ingenuity in sculpture, architecture and painting, all these arts being brought to bear upon the designing and execution of the scenes. The figures had vizards as in the private Masquerade; the subjects of the spectacle were usually drawn from the classics; and triumphal cars were employed.

The Union of Masquerade and Pageant.

Since there were so many points of contact between the Pageant and the Masquerade it was natural that there should be some inter-action, the Pageant influencing the Masquerade, and *vice-versa*. Accordingly we find that the performances at the palaces of the Italian nobility, particularly in Florence under the reign of Lorenzo di Medici, grew extremely elaborate. The private Masque ceased to be a picturesque chain of dances, set off by scenery and a few madrigals. A composite entertainment came into *vogue for* which painter, musician, playwright,

[1] *P. 407.* [2] *Ibid.* p. 408.

sculptor, architect, singer and actor all contributed something. This entertainment was the Italian Masque in its later days when Palladio designed scenes whereon Paul Veronese and Tintoretto lavished the splendours of their palettes. And of a like nature was the English Masque under James I. and Charles when the leading playwright, Ben Jonson, and the first architect of the day, Inigo Jones (himself a disciple of Palladio), and one of the ablest of contemporary musicians, Alfonso Ferrabosco, combined their several powers for the delight of the courtly and critical audiences that crowded the Banquet-chamber at Whitehall.

The Masque in England.

We do not hear of the Masque in this country prior to the year 1500. But performances not dissimilar from the Italian Masque-Pageant and Masquerade, and on which it was easy to graft them, already existed. There were, for instance, the City Pageants celebrated in London, of which we have record as early as 1236[1]. They are said to have been introduced from the Netherlands, and were carried out by members of the Trade-Guilds. Of dialogue or action they had little, if any; all the interest centred on the spectacle. The subjects of the scenes symbolically figured were taken from the trades of the various guilds. At a later time the City Shows assumed a literary colouring; dramatists like Middleton and Dekker thought it worth while to provide the words. But in their earliest form these entertainments fulfilled the promise of their title: they were Pageants, and no more: not so artistic as the Florentine *Trionfi*, not so classical, but essentially akin. Doubtless familiarity with them stood the Masque-writers in good stead when a Masque like Shirley's *Triumph of Peace* had to be devised. The latter, though acted at Whitehall, passed in procession through London from Ely House in Holborn to the Palace. That part of the entertainment was a Pageant. Some of those responsible for its execution may have been present at one of the great Venetian or Florentine festivals. Some of the spectators could recall and mentally contrast scenes witnessed on the banks of the Arno or under the shadow of St Mark's.

[1] Ward, *Dramatic Literature*, vol. i. p. 80.

Still more important for our purpose are the private entertainments at Court and at the houses of the richer nobles. Court-Revels[1] date (at the least) from the time of Edward III. They were superintended by an Abbot (or Lord) of Misrule. When the Emperor Sigismund visited England in 1416 he was amused with a pantomimic representation of the *Life of St George*. "Players of the King's Interludes" are mentioned in the reign of Henry VII. The learned Societies of the Inns of Court did much to foster the progress of the stage. We shall see that their Masques were of the costliest description, being an outcome of the Twelfth Night celebrations. Dugdale tells us that the lawyers made a great point of amusements as an "excellent study" whereby to humanise students such as Mr Justice Shallow is thought to have been. Accordingly "they (i.e. the members of Lincoln's Inn) have very anciently had *dancings* for their recreation and delight, commonly called *Revels*, allowed at certain seasons; and that by special order of the Society, as appeareth in 9 Henry VI., viz. that there should be four Revells that year, and no more...one person yearly elected of the Society, being made choice of for Director in these pastimes...which sports were long before that time used[2]." The same rule applied to all four Inns of Court. Further, several nobles (such as the Lords Northumberland, Oxford, Ferrers and Buckingham) kept up troupes of players at their own expense. They had their private companies of musicians; choristers were attached to their chapels.

Private Entertainments: Disguisings etc.

There was much, therefore, to promote the performance of dramatic pieces—Interludes, Mummings and Disguisings. Of these the Disguising was practically a simple kind of Masque. It differed only in that the performers did not wear vizards.

[1] A wide term; cf. the definition of Revels in Minsheu's *Dictionary* (1617): "Sports of dauncing, masking, comedies, tragedies, and such like, used in the King's house, the houses of Courts (i.e. Inns of Court), and of the great personages."

[2] *Nichols, Progresses of Queen Elizabeth*, I. p. 251.

Ben Jonson indeed identifies the Masque and the Disguising in the following extract from the *Masque of Augurs:*

"*Notch.* Be not so musty, Sir; our desire is only to know whether the King's Majesty and the Court expect any Disguise here to-night?

Groom. Disguise! What mean you by that?

Notch. Disguise was the old English word for a masque, sir, before you were an implement belonging to the Revels.

Groom. There is no such word in the office now, I assure you, sir; I have served here, man and boy, a prenticeship or twain, and I should know. But by whatsoever you call it, here will be a Masque, and shall be a Masque, when you and the rest of your comrogues shall sit *disguised* in the stocks[1]."

Introduction of the Masque into England.

Under these conditions, with the general tendency to imitate and acclimatise Italian styles, the Court maintaining its establishment of actors and musicians[2] (mostly Italians), the wealthy nobles lending private support and patronage to the stage, it was natural that an entertainment so popular as the Masque had become in Italy should be imported into England and straightway thrive; and in the reign of Henry VIII., whose accession had given a great impetus to theatrical amusements of all kinds, the Masque made its appearance. Hall says in his *Chronicle*[3]:

"On the daie of the Epiphanie at night the King with xi other were disguised after the manner of Italie, called a maske, a thing not sene afore in England: thei were appareled in garments long and brode, wrought all with golde, with visers and cappes of gold; and after the banket doen these Maskers came in with the sixe gentlemen disguised in silke, beryng staffe-torches, and desired the ladies to daunce: some were

[1] Cf. Bacon's *Hist. of Henry VII.*, "masks, which were then called disguises," Pitt Press ed. p. 219.

[2] The salaries paid to the musicians attached to the Court of Elizabeth amounted to about £600 annually. Under James I., the musical *establishment* numbered over sixty performers. The existence of this *body would lessen* considerably the cost of producing a Court-Masque.

[3] *Collier*, I. pp. 67—68.

content, and some that knew the fashion of it refused, because it was not a thing commonly seen. And after thei daunced and communed together, as the fashion of the maskes is, thei toke their leave and departed; and so did the Quene and all the ladies."

From this point onward till the close of the century allusions to the Masque occur frequently. The expenses of the Revels[1] in 1515 included "Charges for Masks and Minstrelsy at Calais while the King was at the siege of Terouenne." It was after a Masque-party at Court in 1530 that Henry surprised Wolsey, appearing suddenly at the Cardinal's palace with a train of Masquers[2]. Under Edward VI. and Mary severe restrictions were imposed on the theatre. The Queen, however, supported a company of private players, and in 1557, on St Mark's day, she commanded "a notorious mask of Almaynes, Pilgrymes and Irishemen, with their insidents and accomplishes accordingly[3]." The performance was given out of compliment to her husband who had just come over from Flanders and the newly-arrived Russian ambassador. Two years later Mary visited the Earl of Arundel, at his country-seat Nonsuch, in Surrey.

[1] Collier, I. 68.

[2] The story is told in Cavendish's *Life of Wolsey*. It supplied Shakespeare with the episode at the end of act II. in *Henry VIII.* Warton writes: "With one of these shows, in 1530, the king formed a scheme to surprise Cardinal Wolsey, while he was celebrating a splendid banquet at his palace of Whitehall. At night his majesty in a masque, with twelve more masquers all richly dight but strangely dressed, privately landed from Westminster at Whitehall stairs. At landing several small pieces of cannon were fired, which the king had before ordered to be placed on the shore near the house. The Cardinal ...was alarmed at this sudden and unusual noise; and immediately ordered Lord Sandys, the King's Chamberlain, who was one of the guests and in the secret, to enquire the reason. Lord Sandys brought answer that fourteen foreign noblemen were below." The Masquers were shown into the presence of the Cardinal, talked French to keep up the pretence, and then removed their masques. *History of English Poetry, IV. p. 122.*

[3] *Collier, I. p. 163.*

"There," says Strype[1], "the Queen had great entertainment, with banquets, especially on Sunday night, made by the said earl; together with a Mask, and the warlike sounds of drums and flutes, and all kinds of musick till midnight."

The Masque in Elizabeth's reign.

Under Elizabeth the Masque steadily advanced. Her favourite Leicester was devoted to the stage. He acted as Director of the Revels at the Temple during the Twelfth Night diversions of 1561-62[2]. He had the best company of players then formed in his service; and on the visit of Elizabeth to Kenilworth in 1592 she was entertained with the Pageants described by Scott. In 1594 the Gentlemen of Gray's Inn followed the fashion and invited the Queen to the *Gesta Grayorum*. She was so pleased with their Masque that it had to be repeated at Shrove-tide, the second performance taking place at Court. Elizabeth expressed herself "much beholden" to the Society, "for that it did always study for some sports to present unto her[3]." Part of the poetry was from the pen of Campion. It is interesting to note that the subject was mythological, Proteus, Amphitrite, and several Tritons figuring among the *dramatis personae*.

Masques were costly, and Elizabeth had a nice sense of economy: consequently she preferred to see entertainments of this expensive character at the houses of the nobles rather than at her own Court. Still she patronised one writer whose so-called comedies were not far removed from Masques, viz. Lyly; in 1589 when the consort of James, Anne of Denmark, was expected to arrive in Scotland, Elizabeth despatched a gorgeously equipped train of Masquers[4] to grace the marriage-festivities; and it may have been some performance by the Children of the Chapel Royal that Spenser had in his mind's

[1] Quoted by Warton, III. p. 313.

[2] Nichols, *Progresses of Elizabeth*, I. pp. 131—142.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 319.

[4] Professor Henry Morley quotes the account of this embassy (which was fruitless, as the Queen failed to come) given in the Records of the Revels. See the *Introduction* to his recently published edition of *Ben Jonson's Masques*, pp. xii., xiii., and Fleay's *Chronicle History*, p. 77.

eye when he described "the Maske of Cupid" in the *Faerie Queen*, iii. 12. 6—25.

Characteristics of the XVIth Century Masque.

These references, too scattered and fragmentary to be worked into a very coherent narrative, prove at least that the Masque had become popular. They do not, however, afford very much information as to the nature of the pieces rendered; but our impression is that the development of the Masque in England was parallel to that of its Italian original. The Italian Masquerade, as we saw, assimilated several of the more remarkable features of the Masque-Pageant. It expanded into a complex spectacular representation, strongly coloured by the classical sympathy which the Renaissance had done much to accentuate. So with the English Masque. The entertainment of which Hall's Chronicle spoke was a Masquerade distinguished from the old Disguising only by the fact that the actors wore vizards: the dance formed the pivot on which the evening's amusement turned. But the Masques played before Elizabeth depended for their interest on the presentment of picturesque scenes, heightened by grace of music, of movement, of poetry. The influence of the Pageant had made itself felt. Dancing ceased to be the chief feature of the Masque. What was said of the Italian Masque at its highest point of elaboration is mainly true of the Elizabethan Masque, and wholly so of the Masque of Ben Jonson and his contemporaries. A further point of similarity is that here as across the Alps the Masque remained a private entertainment—the appanage of the Court, of cultured societies, of rich nobles. It found no place on the public stage; firstly, because pieces of which the theme was usually furnished by classical mythology would have little interest for popular audiences; secondly, because the mere cost of producing a single Masque would probably have ruined a theatrical manager like Henslowe.

The Masque in the XVIIth Century.

With the "pedant reign" of James I. came the opportunity of the Masque-writer. James had the Stuart fondness for amusements. He was learned and liked to be the cause of learning in others. Nothing

could have suited his taste better than the stately, academic Masque: it presented such wide possibilities to an enlightened Mæcenas for the display of his classical bent and scholarship. The King delighted in Masques, and the nobles took their cue from the Court. To produce a Masque before the monarch was the readiest way of winning his favour. The index to Nichols' *Progresses of James*, with its long list of entertainments rendered at the houses of his courtiers, shows how frequently this expensive method of securing popularity was employed.

The Music of Masques.

And if Masques were wanted England had at that time two or three artists preeminently capable of supplying them. Music[1], of course, counted for much, and who could write more effectively than the foreign composer Alfonso Ferrabosco[2], long settled in this country? He was not a learned musician, not a theorist whose works exhausted the then known resources of musical *technique*; but, an Italian by birth and training, he could compose exactly the easy, melodious

[1] Cf. the comic prologue with which *Love Restored* begins. The audience are supposed to be waiting. At last the Masque-Genius, Masquerado, enters to explain the cause of the delay. "Good faith, an't please your Majesty, your Masquers are all at a stand; I cannot think your Majesty will see any show to-night, at least worth your patience. Some two hours since, we were in that forwardness, our dances learned, our masqueing attire on, and attired... Unless we should come in like a morrice-dance, and whistle our ballad ourselves, I know not what we should do: we have neither musicians to play our tunes...and the rogue play-boy that acts Cupid is got hoarse."

[2] He was the son of an Italian musician (with the same Christian name) who had come to England about 1550. Alfonso Ferrabosco, the elder, received a pension from Elizabeth in 1567, and twenty years later returned to Italy as Court-composer to the Duke of Savoy. The son accompanied him, and after spending some time abroad settled in England. In 1605 he was appointed music tutor to Prince Henry. He enjoyed the patronage of the Court during his long life. He wrote a good deal of Masque-music, and his name often occurs in the song-books of the period. His son in turn was an accomplished musician, a Doctor in Music of the University of Cambridge (*per regias literas*) and organist of Ely Cathedral. See Grove's *Dictionary of Music*

airs and flowing recitative that the stage needed. Most of the incidental music to Ben Jonson's Masques came from his pen. He is mentioned in them more than once[1].

The Scenery.

To design the scenery of a Masque was no trifling matter, the structural arrangements being at once ornate and ingenious. An architect of first-rate ability was required; if possible, an architect who had learned in Italy the secrets of classical architecture and explored the mechanism of Italian Pageants. These qualifications were united in Inigo Jones. He had studied in the school of Palladio. He had seen many a Pageant-Procession sweeping towards the Lido at Venice or winding through that Ducal Square at Florence on which the lady in Browning's poem looked down. That England, whose great architectonic masters have been few, should have possessed just then an artist trained under such peculiarly favourable and somewhat abnormal conditions, a man whose rare genius raised the preparation of a theatrical *mise-en-scène*[2] to the dignity of a really fine art, was a coincidence of the highest import for the perfecting of the English Masque.

The Poetry.

Nor was the poet lacking. A more competent Masque-writer than Ben Jonson we cannot conceive. He recognised his superlative merit, and wisely proclaimed it. There could be "no brother near the throne;" Fletcher and Chapman might follow, *longiore intervallo*[3]. And Ben Jonson's work was so perfect because he had the true lyric

[1] e.g. in *The Hue and Cry after Cupid*—"the tunes were Master Alfonso Ferrabosco's;" and *The Masque of Queens*—"this last song, whose notes (as the former) were the work and honour of my excellent friend, Alfonso Ferrabosco."

[2] Some of his designs are extant; they are in the possession of the Duke of Devonshire. See Grove's *Dict. of Music*, article on the *Masque*. There is an account of Inigo Jones' connection with the Masque in Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painting, Works* (1798), III. 271—73.

[3] *Jonson told Drummond* of Hawthornden that "next himself, only *Fletcher and Chapman* could make a Masque"—*Ward*, I. p. 589.

vein, could construct a piece with the nicest technical ingenuity, was a master of comic effect and situation (whence the admirable humour of his Anti-masques) and above all, had the whole world of classical antiquity at his feet. Glancing at Ben Jonson's work we shall learn something of that XVIIth century Masque of which Milton's *Comus* was the last great exemplar. Fortunately Jonson not only wrote Masques—he edited them, mentioning the occasion on which each was performed, adding sometimes a list of the performers, describing the decorations, showing how the changes of scene were effected, and giving in the foot-notes a commentary on the classical authorities who had supplied him with the subjects and the symbolism adopted in their treatment.

Ben Jonson's Masques: their subjects, as a rule classical.

Jonson wrote 29 Masques and 6 Entertainments. The latter are scarcely to be distinguished from the Masque proper. Nearly every one either deals directly with a classical theme or has some infusion of classicism. Thus the *Masque of Hymen* is a mosaic of references to ancient marriage-customs; parts might have been written by Catullus. The *Hue and Cry after Cupid* was suggested by an *Idyll* of Moschus. Pan's *Anniversary* is an Arcadian festival, with nymphs and Naiads and shepherds wandering up and down the scene. The *Masque of Augurs* shows that Jonson knew almost everything that could be known about Roman rites of augury. The commentary on the *Masque of Queens* offers a digest of the classical conceptions and practices of witchcraft. We need not extend the list. In the matter of subject Ben Jonson practically fixed the type of the Masque. The theme was ordinarily taken from the classics: the *dramatis personæ* were the old-world dwellers in the classical Olympus or the lesser divinities of mythology: the Masque-writer kept a *Vergil* or an *Ovid*, or a *Dictionary of Antiquities* at his side. *Comus* is far less tinged with classicism than the ordinary Jacobean Masque.

Several of Jonson's Masques, *The Masque of Blackn (1605), The Masque of Queens* (1609), The Fortunate I (1626), were Twelfth Night celebrations at Whitehall.

king and queen each produced a Masque then and at Shrovetide. Ben Jonson wrote for both James and his Consort. The *Masque* of *Beauty* was commanded by the queen: *Love Restored*, by her husband. The Court[1] was the Masque-writers' chief patron, and occasions of special importance to the Court were celebrated by performances in the Banqueting Hall. Thus in 1605 Prince Charles was created Duke of York and a Knight of the Bath: Jonson wrote *The Masque of Blackness* for the festivities that followed the ceremony. In 1610 Prince Henry was declared Prince of Wales and heir to the Crown: the rhymed heroics of the same untiring laureate prophesied prosperity for the young prince who died within three years.

Occasions on which Masques were performed.

Often a Masque formed the climax of a marriage-festival. Jonson says in the introductory note to *The Hue and Cry after Cupid:* "The worthy custom of honouring worthy marriages with these noble solemnities, hath of late years advanced itself frequently with us; to the reputation no less of our Court, than nobles; expressing besides (through the difficulties of expense and travail, with the cheerfulness of undertaking) a most real affection in the personators to those for whose sake they would sustain these persons." *The Masque of Hymen*, *A Challenge at Tilt*, and other pieces come under this category.

Again, Royal visits were usually marked by a Masque-representation. When in 1633 the Court stayed at Welbeck with the Earl of Newcastle, the king was received with *Love's Welcome at Welbeck*. In 1634 the Earl of Newcastle was his host a second time, and Jonson wrote a companion-pageant, *Love's Welcome at Bolsover*. In fact we may say that in the reigns of James and his successor every noteworthy occasion was signalised in the same way; and the Earl of Bridgewater only complied with the demands of fashion when in 1634 he laid upon Henry Lawes the commission which resulted in the performance of Milton's *Comus*.

[1] *Jonson speaks of Masques as being "the donatives of great princes to their people", Love's Triumph through Calipolis.*

The Anti-masque.

We saw that *Arcades* and *Comus* were performed by members of the Egerton family. There was nothing unusual in this. The players in such entertainments were generally noble amateurs[1]. The Queen herself, an excellent actress[2], often took part. She played in *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*, by Samuel Daniel, in 1604; in the same writer's *Masque of Tethys* (1611); in Jonson's *Masque of Blackness*, and in other pieces. Of course the ladies of her Court assisted. Among the Masquers in the *Masque of Beauty* were the Countesses of Arundel, Derby, Bedford, and Montgomery. The Queen's name heads the list. Lower down we read "Lady Arabella." This was the luckless heiress of the House of Lennox. In the exclusiveness of the Masque lay much of its charm. But one[3] part of the performance had to be entrusted to professional players, viz. the Anti-masque or interlude of comedy[4]. Anti-masques were not always introduced: when they were, recourse was had to the skilled services of actors from the public theatres.

[1] Cf. the preface to Jonson's *Masque of Hymen:* "the most royal princes and greatest persons...are commonly the personators of these actions." See also the introduction to the *Masque of Queens*, and Bacon's *Essay* on Masques. Lists of these performers are given in Fleay's *Chronicle Hist.*, pp. 183, 184.

[2] Warton, III. p. 319.

[3] We ought perhaps to qualify this statement by adding that professional musicians (usually the gentlemen of the Chapel Royal) were hired when the solo-parts presented great difficulty. At the conclusion of the *Masque of Queens* Jonson mentions "that most excellent voice and exact singer, her Majesty's Servant, Master Jo. Allin." Compare, too, the account of Shirley's *Triumph of Peace* in Whitelocke's *Memorials*, vol. I. p. 53 *et seq.*

[4] *Anti-masque* is, no doubt, the correct spelling, the derivation being clear: *anti*, *masque*, i.e. "foil, or false masque." Plausible forms are *ante-masque* and *antic-masque:* the former, because the Anti-masque generally preceded the serious part of the entertainment: the latter, because the Anti-masquers were 'anticly' attired. Jonson indeed uses the word *antic-masque* in the *Masque of Augurs*, probably for the sake of the pun.

It would seem that the first piece in which an Anti-masque occurred was Jonson's *Hue and Cry after Cupid* (1608). A stage direction in it says: "At this, from behind the trophies, Cupid discovered himself, and came forth armed; attended with twelve boys, most antickly attired." Cupid invites them in a pretty sextet to "fill the room with revel;" and the direction continues: "They fell into a subtle capricious dance, to as odd a music, each of them bearing two torches, and nodding with their antic faces, with other variety of ridiculous gesture, which gave much occasion of mirth and delight to the spectators." Here we have the Anti-masque in embryo. The *Masque of Queens*, performed next year, is more elaborate. Jonson writes in the introduction: "her Majesty (best knowing that a principal part of life, in these spectacles, lay in their variety) had commanded me to think on some dance or show, that might precede hers, and have the place of a foil, a false masque." This sentence explains the whole theory and practice of the Anti-masque. The latter served, and was meant to serve, as an antithesis to the stately brilliance of the Pageant. The Masque proper was a vision of splendour, suffused with the light that never rested on sea or land. But something suggestive of real life was wanted, characters sketched from the world's Vanity Fair; and this the Anti-masque gave.

The object of the Anti-masque.

Ben Jonson (to whom and not to Chapman belongs, I think, the credit of the invention) used the device with the happiest effect. He was a master of comedy. He wrote an Anti-masque as he might have written a scene in *Every Man Out of his Humour*. His comic interludes teem with clever, witty strokes, true and dramatic characterisation, humorous action. They supply the one element in the Masque faithful to fact, and their effectiveness is increased by the skill with which he inserts them. Often his pieces start with the Anti-masque. Several characters carry on a comic dialogue which reads like an extract from *Bartholomew Fair*. Then suddenly the scene changes: the curtain is rolled back: the audience *are translated at* a breath from contemporary London *to Olympus or the Elysian* fields, and the stereotyped figures of

conventional comedy make way for the stately hierarchy of the classical heaven. Or the band of Anti-masquers will appear in the middle of an entertainment. One moment personifications of Delight, and Harmony, and Love (for the allegorical element predominated throughout the history of the Masque) move across the scene, chanting some rhythmic choral strain to a slow recitative: the next all is confusion: the Anti-masquers rush forward, grotesque in dress and movement. It matters little at what point Ben Jonson brings in the comic diversion. The object aimed at, the effect achieved, are the same: he parodies[1], as it were, his own work, raises a laugh, and achieves a succession of vivid contrasts, fusing the idealism of mythological pageantry with the laughable commonplace or incongruities of the *comédie humaine*[2].

Milton does not attempt to work out an Anti-masque motive in *Comus;* very wisely, as he had little humour in his nature. But it may be conjectured that had Ben Jonson been the author of *Comus* at least two episodes in the poem would have been treated as burlesque interludes; these occur at line 93 where Comus first appears, and at line 957.

One more point in Jonson's Masques must be noticed.

[1] Gifford in his excellent criticism on Jonson's Anti-masques speaks of them as "parodies, or opposites of the main Masques." Perhaps a parallel to the Anti-masque may be found in the satyric drama appended to the tragic trilogies of the Greek dramatists. We may remember, too, how Aristophanes heightens the boisterous realism of his comedy by the use of lyric interludes.

[2] In the hands of inferior writers the Anti-masque degenerated into mere buffoonery. It was made a vulgar vehicle of appeal to the 'groundlings.' Dr Ward quotes Shirley's lament over the non-literary tone of the Masque in its period of decline:

> "Things go not now
> By learning; I have read 'tis but to bring
> Some pretty impossibilities, for anti-masques,
> *A little* sense and wit disposed with thrift,
> *With* here and there monsters to make them laugh
> *For the* grand business"—*The Royal Master*, II. 1.

They are literature: many Jacobean Masques are not. Jonson had a just sense of the dignity of this favourite form of entertainment. He appreciated keenly the finer purposes to which it might be turned, and championed its poetic side. Ready to allow all praise to the inventive resource of Inigo Jones, to the skill displayed by Ferrabosco in setting the airs and choral pieces, to the ingenuity even with which "Master Thomas Giles[1]" arranged and executed corantos, and galliards, and lavoltas, Jonson insisted that the words were the real life and *anima* of the Masque. The place of honour should be given to poetry: the other arts—music, sculpture, painting—must serve as her handmaids. He contended, putting his contention into practice, that the Masque should be "grounded upon solid learning[2]:" should "carry a mixture of profit...no less than delight[3]:" should be the breathing body of high thought and high immortal verse over which floated the "sky-tinctured" robe of scenic splendour[4].

The poetic aspect of the Masque.

It was not a popular view; not by any means the view held by his collaborators. Even some of his brother Masque-writers thought differently[5]. Daniel in the preface to the *Masque of Tethys* declared that the poet's share in a Masque was "the least...and of least note: the only life consists in show, the art and invention of the architect gives the greatest graces, and is of the most importance." Chapman placed his name below that of Inigo Jones on the title page of the *Masque of the Middle Temple* (1612—13). Ben Jonson[6] would have none of this sub-

[1] Related, perhaps, to the composer, Nathaniel Giles, an ex-chorister of Magdalen College, Oxford, who attained great celebrity.

[2] *Masque of Hymen*, preface.

[3] *Love's Triumph through Callipolis*, preface.

[4] According to Mr Symonds the Masque of Ben Jonson "was far superior to anything of the kind which had appeared in Italy;" judged, that is, from the standpoint of poetry.

[5] *Shakspere's Predecessors*, p. 343.

[6] On the title page of *Pan's Anniversarie* he wrote: *The Inventors—Inigo Jones; Ben Jonson.* In subsequent Masques the order of the

servience. The play was the thing—not the decorations. His comedy would wake smiles long after the clever antic-making Anti-masquers had followed the footsteps of Imperial Caesar and turned to clay. The perishable structures of Inigo Jones, the cloud-capped towers and gorgeous palaces that rose like an exhalation in the Banquet Hall would crumble with all their painting and mechanism into dust; but the poet's exquisite lyrics would echo for ever.

The dispute between Jonson and Inigo Jones.

This was the position assumed by Ben Jonson, and the old, irreconcileable antagonism between dramatist and scene-painter has never been put more neatly than in his "Expostulation with Inigo Jones." They were the Dioscuri of the English Masque, and the architect thought that his services were of prior importance; to which the Laureate retorted:

> What is the cause you pomp it so, I ask?
> And all men echo, you have made a masque.
> I chime that too, and I have met with those
> That do cry up the machine, and the shows;
> The majesty of Juno in the clouds,
> And peering forth of Iris in the shrouds;
> The ascent of Lady Fame, which none could spy,
> Not they that sided her, dame Poetry,
> Dame History, dame Architecture too,
> And goody Sculpture, brought with much ado
> To hold her up; O shows, shows, mighty shows,
> The eloquence of masques, what need of prose,
> Or verse, or prose, t' express immortal you?
> . . . . . .
> Or to make boards to speak, there is a task!
> Painting and carpentry are the soul of masque!

The last line is the best possible commentary on many Masques.

names was reversed. Jonson was never reconciled to his old friend, whom he tried to satirise in his last play *The Tale of a Tub*, 1633, one of the four inferior pieces curtly dismissed by Dryden as "Ben's *Dotages.*" Inigo Jones was introduced as "Vitruvius Hoop." He complained to the Master of the Revels, and the part was struck out,

They merely served as pegs whereon to hang costly extravagance. For Jonson the Masque meant literature; and his finest pieces have always the lyric beauty, if only now and then the philosophic elevation, of Milton's *Comus*.

Other Masque-writers.

We have dealt mainly with Ben Jonson because his work embodies the best achievement of the English Masque during the epoch of its ascendance. But he did not stand alone in writing entertainments for the Court and other noble patrons. Shakespeare more than once came very near to composing a Masque. Thus *Midsummer Night's Dream*, written probably for some wedding-celebration, is rather a Masque-comedy than comedy proper. The pageant of Hymen[1] in *As You Like It* might have been detached from an ordinary Masque. The same seems true of *The Tempest*[2], Act IV; and, partially so, of *Cymbeline*, Act V. scene iv. The introduction of Masquers in *Henry VIII.* has been already noted, and we should not forget the frequent references throughout Shake-

[1] A good example of the influence exercised by the Masque. The episode is a beautiful interpolation which really delays the action of the play. It was omitted in the last century representations of *As You Like It*, and first restored to the acting-version by Macready in his notable revival of the comedy. An accomplished Shakesperian critic decides against the retention of the pageant—*Shakespeare's Female Characters*, p. 352.

[2] Tieck argued that the whole play belonged to the class of private pieces written for performance at Court, and was really a species of Masque. The theory is favoured by the fact that the *Tempest* was acted on the occasion of the marriage of James the First's daughter, Princess Elizabeth, with the Elector Palatine in 1613 (Malone, on the authority of the Vertue MSS.). Chapman composed a Masque in honour of the same celebration. Tieck's theory, (restated by Dr Garnett in the *Universal Review*, April, 1889, and the *Irving Shakespeare*, VII. p. 176), deserves attention, if only because it emphasises the point that the *Tempest* has close kinship with the Jacobean Masque. When Shakespeare's comedy was produced at Drury Lane in 1746 the performance concluded with a "Masque of Neptune and Amphitrite," based, probably, on the operatic version of *the Tempest* by Davenant and Dryden.

speare's plays to the Masque. Briefly there is plenty of evidence to show that he was quite familiar with this academic form of drama, and that his style was not unaffected by it. Among regular authors[1] of Masque-entertainments were Beaumont and Fletcher; Dekker and Middleton, who wrote City-Pageants; Daniel, Chapman and Marston, patronised mainly by the Court and nobles; Shirley and Carew.

The two last-mentioned poets represent the fading glories of the Masque. It declined somewhat on the death of James in 1625. Charles I. indeed was equally devoted to amusements. He was a good actor. As a boy he had played in several of Jonson's pieces, and *Love's Triumph through Callipolis* (1630) was performed "by his Majesty, with the Lords and Gentlemen Assisting." But the Masque had become too costly[2]. Financial troubles prevented Charles from being so active a patron as his father. Moreover Ben Jonson was in failing health, and had fallen into disfavour. Between 1626 and 1630 he kept silence. In the latter year two Masques came from his pen: after that he wrote no more for the Court.

Masques at the Inns of Court.

Meantime Whitehall had found a rival in the Inns of Court. The performances given by the legal societies appear to have eclipsed the representa-

[1] Several of them, besides writing regular Masques, introduced in their plays Masque-interludes and pageants similar to the episode in *As You Like It.* Mr Symonds reminds us of the "Bridal Masque" in Fletcher's *Maid's Tragedy.* Webster has a kind of Anti-masque in *The Duchess of Malfi.*

[2] James spent over £4000 on Masques during the first seven years of his reign, roughly equivalent to about £16000 in modern money. It did not include the sums devoted to the same purpose by the Queen, who was notoriously extravagant. Among especially costly Masques were Daniel's *Hymen's Triumph* (£3000), Jonson's *Masque of Blackness* (also about £3000), *The Hue and Cry after Cupid* (nearly (£4000), and Shirley's *Triumph of Peace* (for which see later). An inexpensive piece like Jonson's *Oberon* involved an outlay of only £1000 (See *Shakspere's Predecessors*, p. 339); but this was an exceptionally cheap evening's diversion.

tions at the Palace. Twelfth Night festivities, we saw, had long been a tradition at the Inns and the Temples. From 1594 (when Elizabeth was entertained at Gray's Inn), we hear of their Masques not infrequently. Beaumont and Fletcher composed a piece for the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn in 1612. Dugdale[1], quoting from the Registers of Lincoln's Inn, noted that the third occasion in the history of that society on which extra expenses were voted was at "a Mask in 11 Jan. presented... before the King, at the marraige of the Lady Elizabeth his daughter, to the Prince Elector Palatine of the Rhene; which cost no less than £1536. 8*s.* 11*d.*" This must have been Chapman's piece. But the performance beside which all others paled their fires was that of Shirley's *Triumph of Peace* (1634). Prynne's *Histrio Mastix* had appeared in the previous year. Here was the counterblast[2]. Extremely costly did it prove. The four Inns of Court combined, and the total outlay exceeded

[1] *Progresses of Elizabeth*, vol. I. p. 251.

[2] Cf. Whitelocke's account of the circumstances under which the Masque was produced. He says: "About Allholantide several of the principal members of the societies of the four inns of court, amongst whom some were servants to the king, had a design that the inns of court should present their service to the king and queen, and testify their affections to them, by the outward and splendid visible testimony of a royal mask of all the four societies joining together, to be by them brought to the court, as an expression of their love and duty to their majesties. This was hinted at in the court, and by them intimated to the chief of these societies, that it would be well taken from them, and some held it the more seasonable, because this action would manifest the difference of their opinion from Mr Prynne's new learning, and serve to confute his *Histrio Mastix* against interludes. This design took well with all the inns of court, especially the younger sort of them, and in order to put it into execution, the benchers of each society met, and agreed to have this solemnity performed in the noblest and most stately manner that could be invented"—*Memorials*, vol. I. p. 53. Whitelocke belonged to the Middle Temple where the Revels were more elaborate than at the other Inns of Court, the gentlemen of the society keeping up the old practice of electing a "Prince d'Amour" to preside over entertainments (*Ward*, II. 572, 73).

£21,000[1]. Shirley's Masque was played on February the 3rd. A fortnight later the Court replied with a performance scarcely less magnificent of Carew's *Cœlum Britannicum*. The King was among the Masquers[2].

With these rival representations, the outcome in part of a fictitious enthusiasm, the Masque touched its zenith and fell. Entertainments which swallowed up a sum equivalent to the revenue of a small country could not be matters of frequent occurrence. The royal purse was none too full. Even the loyalty of the Inns of Court must have been sobered by the bill of £5000 that each had to pay[3]. The last Masque at Whitehall

[1] According to Whitelocke, "the persons employed in this mask were paid justly and liberally." He had himself made the arrangements for the musical part of the ceremony. It "excelled any music that ever before that time had been heard in England;" and cost £1000. Some of the musicians (mostly foreigners from the Queen's Chapel) received £100 apiece. They rehearsed for weeks, "English, French, Italian and Germans, and other masters of music: forty lutes, at one time, besides other instruments and voices of the most excellent musicians in consort." On the dresses more than £10,000 was spent. The remaining charges were estimated at another £10,000. Particularly noticeable was an Anti-masque of cripples and beggars, over whose "apparelling" the greatest pains had been taken by "Mr Attorney Noy, Sir John Finch, Sir Edward Herbert, Mr Selden, those great and eminent persons." The presence of such distinguished names shows how serious a matter the rendering of a Masque had become. After the *Triumph* was performed the Queen, Henrietta Maria, and the ladies of her Court danced with the Masquers, and "thus they continued in their sports until it was almost morning;" the morning, namely, of February 4th, 1634.

[2] Also Viscount Brackley and Mr Thomas Egerton, the "two brothers" in *Comus*. The Queen was specially pleased with the play, remarking that "pour les habits elle n'avait jamais rien vue (*sic*) de si brave," *Fleay*, p. 318.

[3] At Gray's Inn the extra expenses incurred on these occasions were divided equally among "all the Society at that time in Commons," *Nichols, Progresses of Elizabeth*, II. p. 393. A list of the Masques represented by the different Inns of Court is printed in Fleay's *Chronicle History*, pp. 416—418.

of which any notice survives fell on Shrove-Tuesday, 1640. Perhaps pageants more splendid than this pathetic "last scene of all" had been witnessed in the chamber from which a few years later Charles I. stepped forth to his execution; but never before had the tinsel radiance and glitter of the Masque been thrown into such dazzling relief by the grim shadow of approaching disaster. The performance[1] closed an interesting chapter in the history of the English drama.

The Masque after the Restoration.

With the Restoration the drama revived; but the Masque had no part in its recrudescence. It did not indeed die out entirely: entertainments which have been popular are always liable to periodic resuscitation from the whims of fashion. In 1675 the Court played Crown's *Masque of Calisto*[2]. There was a Masque at Gray's Inn on Shrove-Tuesday, 1683[3]. Similar representations during the XVIIIth century, and even in our own time[4], might be recorded. But spasmodic revivals have a purely antiquarian interest. Substantially the Masque, as a recognised and regularly practised type of drama, ended with the outbreak of the Civil War; and there were various reasons why it did not come to life again.

First, it had never been based on any firm foundation of popular acceptance. Art which is exclusive and dependent on the patronage of fashion must always be precarious, since what is in vogue to day is voted obsolete tomorrow. The Jacobean nobles had travelled in Italy, bringing home the last-born ingenuities of the Italian Masque: their grandsons stayed in Paris and transplanted to English soil the

[1] The piece was the *Salmacida Spolia* of Davenant who had succeeded Ben Jonson as Poet Laureate.

[2] Cf. Evelyn's *Diary*, II. 94, "saw a comedy, at night, at Court, acted by the ladies only."

[3] Nichols' *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth* (1823), vol. I. p. xxi. He prints a facsimile of the ticket of admission to the Hall of Gray's Inn on this occasion.

[4] See Grove's *Dict. of Music*, Article on the *Masque*, where a piece (*Freya's Gift*) by the late Professor of Music at Cambridge, Sir George Macfarren, is classed as a Masque.

comedy of Molière. Again, the conditions under which the stage thrived after the Restoration were different from what they had been before the Civil War. As the public theatre developed private representations declined. Under the tyranny of Puritanism the tradition of amateur-acting had passed away. The stage was now in the hands of professional players who trusted entirely to popular support; and the audiences who applauded the eccentricities of Sir Fopling Flutter or Sir Courtly Nice would have cared nothing for the lyric charm and learning of Jonson's *Masque of Hymen*. Lastly, the Masque had been too multifarious in motive. It had included everything that could be pressed into the service of the stage, the interest of costly scenery, sculpture, painting, architecture; comedy, declamation, dialogue; picturesque dance and movement; music in the form of solo-melodies, of recitative to which much of the *libretto* was declaimed, and of incidental accompaniment to the action.

The Masque is succeeded by the Opera.

A priori we should expect that an art so complex would fall to pieces, and that some outcome that embodied the main elements of the original would arise from its ruins. The Opera was the direct and lineal successor of the Masque. Some of the later Masques of Charles' reign cannot have been far removed from operas. The transition was easy. Musicians who began by writing Masque-music ended by composing operas. The first piece to which historians of the drama assign the title opera is Davenant's *Siege of Rhodes*[1], 1656. Part of the music was written by Lawes, part by Lock. The latter, who afterwards gained celebrity by his operatic setting of Davenant's adaptation of *Macbeth* (1673), and Shadwell's *Psyche*, had as a young man supplied the musical framework of Shirley's Masque, *Cupid and Death*. Lawes' connection with the Masque is noticed elsewhere. The names of these composers supply the necessary link of connection. They unite the first period of the short-lived English Opera with the later history of the once-resplendent English Masque.

[1] Some account of the performance is given in Mr Sutherland Edwards' *History of the Opera*, vol. I. 30, 31.

ARCADES.

ARCADES.

t of an Entertainment presented to the Countess Dowager of Derby at Harefield by some Noble Persons of her Family; who appear on the Scene in pastoral habit, moving toward the seat of state, with this song:

1. *Song.*

Look, Nymphs and Shepherds, look!
What sudden blaze of majesty
Is that which we from hence descry,
Too divine to be mistook?
This, this is she
To whom our vows and wishes bend:
Here our solemn search hath end.
Fame, that her high worth to raise
Seemed erst so lavish and profuse,
We may justly now accuse
Of detraction from her praise:
Less than half we find expressed;
Envy bid conceal the rest.

Mark what radiant state she spreads,
In circle round her shining throne
Shooting her beams like silver threads:
This, this is she alone,
Sitting like a goddess bright
In the centre of her light.

Might she the wise Latona be,
Or the towered Cybele,
Mother of a hundred gods?
Juno dares not give her odds:
Who had thought this clime had held
A deity so unparalleled?

As they come forward, THE GENIUS OF THE WOOD *appears, and, turning toward them, speaks.*

Gen. Stay, gentle Swains, for, though in this disguise,
I see bright honour sparkle through your eyes;
Of famous Arcady ye are, and sprung
Of that renowned flood, so often sung,
Divine Alpheus, who, by secret sluice,
Stole under seas to meet his Arethuse;
And ye, the breathing roses of the wood,
Fair silver-buskined Nymphs, as great and good.
I know this quest of yours and free intent
Was all in honour and devotion meant
To the great mistress of yon princely shrine,
Whom with low reverence I adore as mine,
And with all helpful service will comply
To further this night's glad solemnity,
And lead ye where ye may more near behold
What shallow-searching Fame hath left untold;
Which I full oft, amidst these shades alone,
Have sat to wonder at, and gaze upon.
For know, by lot from Jove, I am the Power
Of this fair wood, and live in oaken bower,
To nurse the saplings tall, and curl the grove
With ringlets quaint and wanton windings wove;
And all my plants I save from nightly ill
Of noisome winds and blasting vapours chill;

And from the boughs brush off the evil dew,
And heal the harms of thwarting thunder blue,
Or what the cross dire-looking planet smites,
Or hurtful worm with cankered venom bites.
When evening grey doth rise, I fetch my round
Over the mount, and all this hallowed ground;
And early, ere the odorous breath of morn
Awakes the slumbering leaves, or tasselled horn
Shakes the high thicket, haste I all about,
Number my ranks, and visit every sprout
With puissant words and murmurs made to bless.
But else, in deep of night, when drowsiness
Hath locked up mortal sense, then listen I
To the celestial Sirens' harmony,
That sit upon the nine infolded spheres,
And sing to those that hold the vital shears,
And turn the adamantine spindle round
On which the fate of gods and men is wound.
Such sweet compulsion doth in music lie,
To lull the daughters of Necessity,
And keep unsteady Nature to her law,
And the low world in measured motion draw
After the heavenly tune, which none can hear
Of human mould with gross unpurgèd ear.
And yet such music worthiest were to blaze
The peerless height of her immortal praise
Whose lustre leads us, and for her most fit,
If my inferior hand or voice could hit
Inimitable sounds. Yet, as we go,
Whate'er the skill of lesser gods can show
I will assay, her worth to celebrate,
And so attend ye toward her glittering state;
Where ye may all, that are of noble stem,
Approach, and kiss her sacred vesture's hem.

II. *Song.*

O'er the smooth enamelled green,
Where no print of step hath been,
Follow me, as I sing
And touch the warbled string:
Under the shady roof
Of branching elm star-proof
Follow me.
I will bring you where she sits,
Clad in splendour as befits
Her deity.
Such a rural Queen
All Arcadia hath not seen.

III. *Song.*

Nymphs and Shepherds, dance no more
By sandy Ladon's lilied banks;
On old Lycæus, or Cyllene hoar,
Trip no more in twilight ranks;
Though Erymanth your loss deplore,
A better soil shall give ye thanks.
From the stony Mænalus
Bring your flocks, and live with us;
Here ye shall have greater grace,
To serve the Lady of this place.
Though Syrinx your Pan's mistress were,
Yet Syrinx well might wait on her.
Such a rural Queen
All Arcadia hath not seen.

COMUS.

"A MASQUE PRESENTED AT LUDLOW CASTLE, 1634."

DEDICATION[1] OF THE ANONYMOUS EDITION OF 1637.

"*To the Right Honourable John, Lord Brackley, son and heir-apparent to the Earl of Bridgewater etc.*"

"MY LORD,

"This Poem, which received its first occasion of birth from yourself and others of your noble family, and much honour from your own person in the performance, now returns again to make a final dedication of itself to you. Although not openly acknowledged by the Author, yet it is a legitimate offspring, so lovely and so much desired that the often copying of it hath tired my pen to give my several friends satisfaction, and brought me to a necessity of producing it to the public view, and now to offer it up, in all rightful devotion, to those fair hopes and rare endowments of your much-promising youth, which give a full assurance to all that know you of a future excellence. Live, sweet Lord, to be the honour of your name; and receive this as your own from the hands of him who hath by many favours been long obliged to your most honoured Parents, and, as in this representation your attendant *Thyrsis*, so now in all real expression

Your most faithful and most humble Servant,

H. LAWES."

[1] Reprinted in the edition of 1645: omitted in that of 1673.

"*The Copy*[1] *of a Letter written by Sir Henry Wotton to the Author upon the following Poem.*"

"From the College, this 13 of April, 1638.

"Sir,

"It was a special favour when you lately bestowed upon me here the first taste of your acquaintance, though no longer than to make me know that I wanted more time to value it and to enjoy it rightly; and, in truth, if I then could have imagined your farther stay in these parts, which I understood afterwards by Mr H., I would have been bold, in our vulgar phrase, to mend my draught (for you left me with an extreme thirst), and to have begged your conversation again, jointly with your said learned friend, over a poor meal or two, that we might have banded together some good Authors of the ancient time; among which I observed you to have been familiar.

"Since your going, you have charged me with new obligations, both for a very kind letter from you dated the 6th of this month, and for a dainty piece of entertainment which came therewith. Wherein I should much commend the tragical part, if the lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Doric delicacy in your Songs and Odes, whereunto I must plainly confess to have seen yet nothing parallel in our language: *Ipsa mollities.* But I must not omit to tell you that I now only owe you thanks for intimating unto me (how modestly soever) the true artificer. For the work itself I had viewed some good while before with singular delight; having received it from our common friend Mr R., in the very close of the late R.'s Poems, printed at Oxford: whereunto it was added (as I now suppose) that the accessory might help out the principal, according to the art of Stationers, and to leave the reader *con la bocca dolce.*

"Now, Sir, concerning your travels; wherein I may challenge a little more privilege of discourse with you. I suppose you will not blanch Paris in your way: therefore I have been bold to trouble you with a few lines to Mr. M. B., whom you shall

[1] Omitted in the reprint of 1673, this letter was given in the edition *of 1645.*

easily find attending the young Lord S. as his governor; and you may surely receive from him good directions for the shaping of your farther journey into Italy where he did reside, by my choice, some time for the King, after mine own recess from Venice.

"I should think that your best line will be through the whole length of France to Marseilles, and thence by sea to Genoa; whence the passage into Tuscany is as diurnal as a Gravesend barge. I hasten, as you do, to Florence or Siena, the rather to tell you a short story, from the interest you have given me in your safety.

"At Siena I was tabled in the house of one Alberto Scipioni, an old Roman courtier in dangerous times; having been steward to the Duca di Pagliano, who with all his family were strangled, save this only man that escaped by foresight of the tempest. With him I had often much chat of those affairs, into which he took pleasure to look back from his native harbour; and, at my departure toward Rome (which had been the centre of his experience), I had won his confidence enough to beg his advice how I might carry myself there without offence of others or of mine own conscience. '*Signor Arrigo mio,*' says he, '*i pensieri stretti ed il viso sciolto* will go safely over the whole world.' Of which Delphian oracle (for so I have found it) your judgment doth need no commentary; and therefore, Sir, I will commit you, with it, to the best of all securities, God's dear love, remaining

"Your friend, as much to command as any of longer date,

"HENRY WOTTON."

Postscript.

"Sir: I have expressly sent this my footboy to prevent your departure without some acknowledgment from me of the receipt of your obliging letter; having myself through some business, I know not how, neglected the ordinary conveyance. In any part where I shall understand you fixed, I shall be glad and diligent to entertain you with home-novelties, even for some fomentation of *our* friendship, too soon interrupted in the *cradle.*"

THE PERSONS.

THE ATTENDANT SPIRIT, afterwards in the habit of THYRSIS.

COMUS, with his Crew.

THE LADY.

FIRST BROTHER.

SECOND BROTHER.

SABRINA, the Nymph.

The Chief Persons which presented were:—

The Lord Brackley;
Mr. Thomas Egerton, his Brother;
The Lady Alice Egerton.

COMUS.

The first Scene discovers a wild wood.

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT *descends or enters.*

BEFORE the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
Of bright aerial spirits live insphered
In regions mild of calm and serene air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
Which men call Earth, and, with low-thoughted care,
Confined and pestered in this pinfold here,
Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives,
After this mortal change, to her true servants
Amongst the enthroned gods on sainted seats.
Yet some there be that by due steps aspire
To lay their just hands on that golden key
That opes the palace of eternity.
To such my errand is; and, but for such,
I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds
With the rank vapours of this sin-worn mould.
But to my task. Neptune, besides the sway
Of every salt flood and each ebbing stream,
Took in, by lot 'twixt high and nether Jove,
Imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles
That, like to rich and various gems, inlay
The unadornèd bosom of the deep;

Which he, to grace his tributary gods,
By course commits to several government,
And gives them leave to wear their sapphire crowns
And wield their little tridents. But this Isle,
The greatest and the best of all the main,
He quarters to his blue-haired deities;
And all this tract that fronts the falling sun
A noble Peer of mickle trust and power
Has in his charge, with tempered awe to guide
An old and haughty nation, proud in arms:
Where his fair offspring, nursed in princely lore,
Are coming to attend their father's state,
And new-intrusted sceptre. But their way
Lies through the perplexed paths of this drear wood,
The nodding horror of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger;
And here their tender age might suffer peril,
But that, by quick command from sovran Jove,
I was despatched for their defence and guard!
And listen why; for I will tell you now
What never yet was heard in tale or song,
From old or modern bard, in hall or bower.
Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape
Crushed the sweet poison of misusèd wine,
After the Tuscan mariners transformed,
Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listed,
On Circe's island fell. (Who knows not Circe,
The daughter of the Sun, whose charmèd cup
Whoever tasted lost his upright shape,
And downward fell into a grovelling swine?)
This Nymph, that gazed upon his clustering locks,
With ivy berries wreathed, and his blithe youth,
Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son

Much like his father, but his mother more,
Whom therefore she brought up, and Comus named:
Who, ripe and frolic of his full-grown age,
Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields,
At last betakes him to this ominous wood,
And, in thick shelter of black shades imbowered,
Excels his mother at her mighty art;
Offering to every weary traveller
His orient liquor in a crystal glass,
To quench the drouth of Phœbus; which as they taste
(For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst),
Soon as the potion works, their human count'nance,
The express resemblance of the gods, is changed
Into some brutish form of wolf or bear,
Or ounce or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,
All other parts remaining as they were.
And they, so perfect is their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before,
And all their friends and native home forget,
To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.
Therefore, when any favoured of high Jove
Chances to pass through this adventurous glade,
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star
I shoot from heaven, to give him safe convoy,
As now I do. But first I must put off
These my sky-robes, spun out of Iris' woof,
And take the weeds and likeness of a swain
That to the service of this house belongs,
Who, with his soft pipe and smooth-dittied song,
Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
And hush the waving woods; nor of less faith,
And *in this office of* his mountain watch

Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid
Of this occasion. But I hear the tread
Of hateful steps; I must be viewless now.

COMUS *enters, with a charming-rod in one hand, his glass in the other; with him a rout of monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistering. They come in making a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands.*

Comus. The star that bids the shepherd fold
Now the top of heaven doth hold;
And the gilded car of day
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantic stream:
And the slope sun his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky pole,
Pacing toward the other goal
Of his chamber in the east.
Meanwhile, welcome joy and feast,
Midnight shout and revelry,
Tipsy dance and jollity.
Braid your locks with rosy twine,
Dropping odours, dropping wine.
Rigour now is gone to bed;
And Advice with scrupulous head,
Strict Age, and sour Severity,
With their grave saws, in slumber lie.
We, that are of purer fire,
Imitate the starry quire,
Who, in their nightly watchful spheres,
Lead in swift round the months and years.
The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,
Now to the moon in wavering morrice move;

And on the tawny sands and shelves
Trip the pert faeries and the dapper elves.
By dimpled brook and fountain-brim,
The wood-nymphs, decked with daisies trim,
Their merry wakes and pastimes keep:
What hath night to do with sleep?
Night hath better sweets to prove;
Venus now wakes, and wakens Love.
Come, let us our rites begin;
'Tis only daylight that makes sin,
Which these dun shades will ne'er report.
Hail, goddess of nocturnal sport,
Dark-veiled Cotytto, to whom the secret flame
Of midnight torches burns! mysterious dame,
That ne'er art called but when the dragon womb
Of Stygian darkness spets her thickest gloom,
And makes one blot of all the air!
Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,
Wherein thou ridest with Hecat', and befriend
Us thy vowed priests, till utmost end
Of all thy dues be done, and none left out
Ere the blabbing eastern scout,
The nice Morn on the Indian steep,
From her cabined loop-hole peep,
And to the tell-tale Sun descry
Our concealed solemnity.
Come, knit hands, and beat the ground
In a light fantastic round.

The Measure.

Break off, break off! I feel the different pace
Of *some chaste footing* near about this ground.

Run to your shrouds within these brakes and trees;
Our number may affright. Some virgin sure
(For so I can distinguish by mine art)
Benighted in these woods! Now to my charms,
And to my wily trains: I shall ere long
Be well stocked with as fair a herd as grazed
About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl
My dazzling spells into the spongy air,
Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion,
And give it false presentments, lest the place
And my quaint habits breed astonishment,
And put the damsel to suspicious flight;
Which must not be, for that's against my course.
I, under fair pretence of friendly ends,
And well-placed words of glozing courtesy,
Baited with reasons not unplausible,
Wind me into the easy-hearted man,
And hug him into snares. When once her eye
Hath met the virtue of this magic dust
I shall appear some harmless villager,
Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.
But here she comes; I fairly step aside,
And hearken, if I may her business hear.

The LADY *enters.*

Lady. This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,
My best guide now. Methought it was the sound
Of riot and ill-managed merriment,
Such as the jocund flute or gamesome pipe
Stirs up among the loose unlettered hinds,
When, for their teeming flocks and granges full,
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,
And thank the gods amiss. I should be loth

To meet the rudeness and swilled insolence
Of such late wassailers; yet, oh! where else
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet
In the blind mazes of this tangled wood?
My brothers, when they saw me wearied out
With this long way, resolving here to lodge
Under the spreading favour of these pines,
Stepped, as they said, to the next thicket-side
To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit
As the kind hospitable woods provide.
They left me then when the grey-hooded Even,
Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed,
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain.
But where they are, and why they came not back,
Is now the labour of my thoughts. 'Tis likeliest
They had engaged their wandering steps too far;
And envious darkness, ere they could return,
Had stole them from me. Else, O thievish Night,
Why shouldst thou, but for some felonious end,
In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars
That Nature hung in heaven, and filled their lamps
With everlasting oil, to give due light
To the misled and lonely traveller?
This is the place, as well as I may guess,
Whence even now the tumult of loud mirth
Was rife, and perfect in my listening ear;
Yet nought but single darkness do I find.
What might this be? A thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory,
Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
And airy tongues that syllable men's names
On sands and shores and desert wildernesses.
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound

The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
By a strong siding champion, Conscience.
O, welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,
And thou unblemished form of Chastity!
I see ye visibly, and now believe
That He, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
Would send a glistering guardian, if need were,
To keep my life and honour unassailed. . . . .
Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?
I did not err: there does a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
And casts a gleam over this tufted grove.
I cannot hallo to my brothers, but
Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest
I'll venture; for my new-enlivened spirits
Prompt me, and they perhaps are not far off.

Song.

Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen
Within thy airy shell
By slow Meander's margent green,
And in the violet-embroidered vale
Where the love-lorn nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well:
Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
That likest thy Narcissus are?
O, if thou have
Hid them in some flowery cave,
Tell me but where,
Sweet Queen of Parley, Daughter of the sphere!

So may'st thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all heaven's harmonies!

Comus. Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
And with these raptures moves the vocal air
To testify his hidden residence.
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall smoothing the raven down
Of darkness till it smiled! I have oft heard
My mother Circe with the Sirens three,
Amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades,
Culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs,
Who, as they sung, would take the prisoned soul,
And lap it in Elysium: Scylla wept,
And chid her barking waves into attention,
And fell Charybdis murmured soft applause.
Yet they in pleasing slumber lulled the sense,
And in sweet madness robbed it of itself;
But such a sacred and home-felt delight,
Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
I never heard till now. I'll speak to her,
And she shall be my queen.—Hail, foreign wonder!
Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,
Unless the goddess that in rural shrine
Dwell'st here with Pan or Sylvan, by blest song
Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.

Lady. Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise
That is addressed to unattending ears.
Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift

How to regain my severed company,
Compelled me to awake the courteous Echo
To give me answer from her mossy couch.
Comus. What chance, good Lady, hath bereft you thus?
Lady. Dim darkness and this leavy labyrinth.
Comus. Could that divide you from near-ushering guides?
Lady. They left me weary on a grassy turf.
Comus. By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why?
Lady. To seek i' the valley some cool friendly spring.
Comus. And left your fair side all unguarded, Lady?
Lady. They were but twain, and purposed quick return.
Comus. Perhaps forestalling night prevented them.
Lady. How easy my misfortune is to hit!
Comus. Imports their loss, beside the present need?
Lady. No less than if I should my brothers lose.
Comus. Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?
Lady. As smooth as Hebe's their unrazored lips.
Comus. Two such I saw, what time the laboured ox
In his loose traces from the furrow came,
And the swinked hedger at his supper sat.
I saw them under a green mantling vine,
That crawls along the side of yon small hill,
Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots;
Their port was more than human, as they stood.
I took it for a faery vision
Of some gay creatures of the element,
That in the colours of the rainbow live,
And play i' the plighted clouds. I was awe-strook,
And, as I passed, I worshipped. If those you seek,
It were a journey like the path to Heaven
To help you find them.
Lady. Gentle villager,
What readiest way would bring me to that place?

Comus. Due west it rises from this shrubby point.
Lady. To find out that, good shepherd, I suppose,
In such a scant allowance of star-light,
Would overtask the best land-pilot's art,
Without the sure guess of well-practised feet.
Comus. I know each lane, and every alley green,
Dingle, or bushy dell, of this wild wood,
And every bosky bourn from side to side,
My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood;
And, if your stray attendance be yet lodged,
Or shroud within these limits, I shall know
Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted lark
From her thatched pallet rouse. If otherwise,
I can conduct you, Lady, to a low
But loyal cottage, where you may be safe
Till further quest.
Lady. Shepherd, I take thy word,
And trust thy honest-offered courtesy,
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds,
With smoky rafters, than in tapestry halls
And courts of princes, where it first was named,
And yet is most pretended. In a place
Less warranted than this, or less secure,
I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.
Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial
To my proportioned strength! Shepherd, lead on. . .
[*Exeunt.*

Enter the Two Brothers.

Eld. Bro. Unmuffle, ye faint stars; and thou, fair moon,
That wont'st to love the traveller's benison,
Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
And disinherit Chaos, that reigns here

In double night of darkness and of shades;
Or, if your influence be quite dammed up
With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,
Though a rush-candle from the wicker hole
Of some clay habitation, visit us
With thy long levelled rule of streaming light,
And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,
Or Tyrian Cynosure.

Sec. Bro. Or, if our eyes
Be barred that happiness, might we but hear
The folded flocks, penned in their wattled cotes,
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
Count the night-watches to his feathery dames,
'Twould be some solace yet, some little cheering,
In this close dungeon of innumerous boughs.
But, Oh, that hapless virgin, our lost sister!
Where may she wander now, whither betake her
From the chill dew, amongst rude burs and thistles?
Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,
Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm
Leans her unpillowed head, fraught with sad fears.
What if in wild amazement and affright,
Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp
Of savage hunger, or of savage heat!

Eld. Bro. Peace, brother: be not over-exquisite
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils;
For, grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
What need a man forestall his date of grief,
And run to meet what he would most avoid?
Or, if they be but false alarms of fear,
How bitter is such self-delusion!
I do not think my sister so to seek,

Or so unprincipled in virtue's book,
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
As that the single want of light and noise
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not)
Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
And put them into misbecoming plight.
Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk. And Wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude,
Where, with her best nurse, Contemplation,
She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,
That, in the various bustle of resort,
Were all to-ruffled, and sometimes impaired.
He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day:
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon.
Sec. Bro. 'Tis most true
That musing Meditation most affects
The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,
And sits as safe as in a senate-house;
For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,
His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,
Or do his grey hairs any violence?
But Beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
Of dragon-watch with unenchanted eye
To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit,
From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.
You may as well spread out the unsunned heaps

Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den,
And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope
Danger will wink on Opportunity,
And let a single helpless maiden pass
Uninjured in this wild surrounding waste.
Of night or loneliness it recks me not;
I fear the dread events that dog them both,
Lest some ill-greeting touch attempt the person
Of our unowned sister.

Eld. Bro. I do not, brother,
Infer as if I thought my sister's state
Secure without all doubt or controversy;
Yet, where an equal poise of hope and fear
Does arbitrate the event, my nature is
That I incline to hope rather than fear,
And gladly banish squint suspicion.
My sister is not so defenceless left
As you imagine; she has a hidden strength,
Which you remember not.

Sec. Bro. What hidden strength,
Unless the strength of Heaven, if you mean that?

Eld. Bro. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,
Which, if Heaven gave it, may be termed her own.
'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity:
She that has that is clad in complete steel,
And, like a quivered nymph with arrows keen,
May trace huge forests, and unharboured heaths,
Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds;
Where, through the sacred rays of chastity,
No savage fierce, bandite, or mountaineer,
Will dare to soil her virgin purity.
Yea, there where very desolation dwells,
By grots and caverns shagged with horrid shades,

She may pass on with unblenched majesty,
Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.
Some say no evil thing that walks by night,
In fog or fire, by lake or moorish fen,
Blue meagre hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost,
That breaks his magic chains at curfew time,
No goblin or swart faery of the mine,
Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.
Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call
Antiquity from the old schools of Greece
To testify the arms of chastity?
Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow,
Fair silver-shafted queen for ever chaste,
Wherewith she tamed the brinded lioness
And spotted mountain-pard, but set at nought
The frivolous bolt of Cupid; gods and men
Feared her stern frown, and she was queen o' the woods.
What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield
That wise Minerva wore, unconquered virgin,
Wherewith she freezed her foes to congealed stone,
But rigid looks of chaste austerity,
And noble grace that dashed brute violence
With sudden adoration and blank awe?
So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity
That, when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried angels lackey her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
And in clear dream and solemn vision
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear;
Till oft converse with heavenly habitants
Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,

Till all be made immortal. But, when lust,
By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
But most by lewd and lavish act of sin,
Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
The soul grows clotted by contagion,
Imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite lose
The divine property of her first being.
Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp
Oft seen in charnel-vaults and sepulchres,
Lingering and sitting by a new-made grave,
As loth to leave the body that it loved,
And linked itself by carnal sensualty
To a degenerate and degraded state.
Sec. Bro. How charming is divine Philosophy!
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns.
Eld. Bro. List! list! I hear
Some far-off hallo break the silent air.
Sec. Bro. Methought so too; what should it be?
Eld. Bro. For certain,
Either some one, like us, night-foundered here,
Or else some neighbour woodman, or, at worst,
Some roving robber calling to his fellows.
Sec. Bro. Heaven keep my sister! Again, again, and near!
Best draw, and stand upon our guard.
Eld. Bro. I'll hallo.
If he be friendly, he comes well: if not,
Defence is a good cause, and Heaven be for us

Enter the ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *habited like a shepherd.*

That hallo I should know. What are you? speak.

Come not too near; you fall on iron stakes else.
Spir. What voice is that? my young Lord? speak again.
Sec. Bro. O brother, 'tis my father's Shepherd, sure.
Eld. Bro. Thyrsis! whose artful strains have oft delayed
The huddling brook to hear his madrigal,
And sweetened every musk-rose of the dale.
How camest thou here, good swain? Hath any ram
Slipped from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,
Or straggling wether the pent flock forsook?
How couldst thou find this dark sequestered nook?
Spir. O my loved master's heir, and his next joy,
I came not here on such a trivial toy
As a strayed ewe, or to pursue the stealth
Of pilfering wolf; not all the fleecy wealth
That doth enrich these downs is worth a thought
To this my errand, and the care it brought.
But, oh! my virgin Lady, where is she?
How chance she is not in your company?
Eld. Bro. To tell thee sadly, Shepherd, without blame
Or our neglect, we lost her as we came.
Spir. Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true.
Eld. Bro. What fears, good Thyrsis? Prithee briefly shew.
Spir. I'll tell ye. 'Tis not vain or fabulous
(Though so esteemed by shallow ignorance)
What the sage poets, taught by the heavenly Muse,
Storied of old in high immortal verse
Of dire Chimeras and enchanted isles,
And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to Hell,
For such there be, but unbelief is blind.
Within the navel of this hideous wood,
Immured in cypress shades, a sorcerer dwells,
Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,
Deep skilled in all his mother's witcheries,

And here to every thirsty wanderer
By sly enticement gives his baneful cup,
With many murmurs mixed, whose pleasing poison
The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
And the inglorious likeness of a beast
Fixes instead, unmoulding reason's mintage
Charactered in the face. This have I learnt
Tending my flocks hard by i' the hilly crofts
That brow this bottom glade; whence night by night
He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl
Like stabled wolves, or tigers at their prey,
Doing abhorred rites to Hecate
In their obscurèd haunts of inmost bowers.
Yet have they many baits and guileful spells
To inveigle and invite the unwary sense
Of them that pass unweeting by the way.
This evening late, by then the chewing flocks
Had ta'en their supper on the savoury herb
Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,
I sat me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting honeysuckle, and began,
Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
To meditate my rural minstrelsy,
Till fancy had her fill. But ere a close
The wonted roar was up amidst the woods,
And filled the air with barbarous dissonance;
At which I ceased, and listened them a while,
Till an unusual stop of sudden silence
Gave respite to the drowsy-flighted steeds
That draw the litter of close-curtained Sleep.
At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound
Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,

And stole upon the air, that even Silence
Was took ere she was ware, and wished she might
Deny her nature, and be never more,
Still to be so displaced. I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of Death. But, oh! ere long
Too well I did perceive it was the voice
Of my most honoured Lady, your dear sister.
Amazed I stood, harrowed with grief and fear;
And 'O poor hapless nightingale,' thought I,
'How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!'
Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste,
Through paths and turnings often trod by day,
Till, guided by mine ear, I found the place
Where that damned wizard, hid in sly disguise
(For so by certain signs I knew), had met
Already, ere my best speed could prevent,
The aidless innocent lady, his wished prey;
Who gently asked if he had seen such two,
Supposing him some neighbour villager.
Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guessed
Ye were the two she meant; with that I sprung
Into swift flight, till I had found you here;
But further know I not.

Sec. Bro. O night and shades,
How are ye joined with hell in triple knot
Against the unarmed weakness of one virgin,
Alone and helpless! Is this the confidence
You gave me, brother?

Eld. Bro. Yes, and keep it still;
Lean on it safely; not a period
Shall be unsaid for me. Against the threats
Of malice or of sorcery, or that power

Which erring men call Chance, this I hold firm:
Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt,
Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled;
Yea, even that which Mischief meant most harm
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.
But evil on itself shall back recoil,
And mix no more with goodness, when at last,
Gathered like scum, and settled to itself,
It shall be in eternal restless change
Self-fed and self-consumed. If this fail,
The pillared firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble. But come, let's on!
Against the opposing will and arm of Heaven
May never this just sword be lifted up;
But, for that damned magician, let him be girt
With all the griesly legions that troop
Under the sooty flag of Acheron,
Harpies and Hydras, or all the monstrous forms
'Twixt Africa and Ind, I'll find him out,
And force him to return his purchase back,
Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,
Cursed as his life.

Spir. Alas! good venturous youth,
I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise;
But here thy sword can do thee little stead.
Far other arms and other weapons must
Be those that quell the might of hellish charms.
He with his bare wand can unthread thy joints,
And crumble all thy sinews.

Eld. Bro. Why, prithee, Shepherd,
How durst thou then thyself approach so near
As to make this relation?

Spir. Care and utmost shifts

How to secure the Lady from surprisal
Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,
Of small regard to see to, yet well skilled
In every virtuous plant and healing herb
That spreads her verdant leaf to the morning ray.
He loved me well, and oft would beg me sing;
Which when I did, he on the tender grass
Would sit, and hearken even to ecstasy,
And in requital ope his leathern scrip,
And show me simples of a thousand names,
Telling their strange and vigorous faculties.
Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,
But of divine effect, he culled me out.
The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,
But in another country, as he said,
Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil:
Unknown, and like esteemed, and the dull swain
Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon;
And yet more medicinal is it than that Moly
That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave.
He called it Hæmony, and gave it me,
And bade me keep it as of sovran use
'Gainst all enchantments, mildew blast, or damp,
Or ghastly Furies' apparition.
I pursed it up, but little reckoning made,
Till now that this extremity compelled.
But now I find it true; for by this means
I knew the foul enchanter, though disguised,
Entered the very lime-twigs of his spells,
And yet came off. If you have this about you
(As I will give you when we go) you may
Boldly assault the necromancer's hall;
Where *if he be, with* dauntless hardihood

And brandished blade rush on him: break his glass,
And shed the luscious liquor on the ground;
But seize his wand. Though he and his curst crew
Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high,
Or, like the sons of Vulcan, vomit smoke,
Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.
Eld. Bro. Thyrsis, lead on apace; I'll follow thee;
And some good angel bear a shield before us!

The Scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness: soft music, tables spread with all dainties. COMUS *appears with his rabble, and* THE LADY *set in an enchanted chair; to whom he offers his glass; which she puts by, and goes about to rise.*

Comus. Nay, Lady, sit. If I but wave this wand,
Your nerves are all chained up in alabaster,
And you a statue, or as Daphne was,
Root-bound, that fled Apollo.
Lady. Fool, do not boast.
Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind
With all thy charms, although this corporal rind
Thou hast immanacled while Heaven sees good.
Comus. Why are you vexed, Lady? why do you frown?
Here dwell no frowns, nor anger; from these gates
Sorrow flies far. See, here be all the pleasures
That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
Brisk as the April buds in primrose season.
And first behold this cordial julep here,
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,
With spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mixed.
Not that Nepenthes which the wife of Thone
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena

Is of such power to stir up joy as this,
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.
Why should you be so cruel to yourself,
And to those dainty limbs, which Nature lent
For gentle usage and soft delicacy?
But you invert the covenants of her trust,
And harshly deal, like an ill borrower,
With that which you received on other terms,
Scorning the unexempt condition
By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
That have been tired all day without repast,
And timely rest have wanted. But, fair virgin,
This will restore all soon.

Lady. 'Twill not, false traitor!
'Twill not restore the truth and honesty
That thou hast banished from thy tongue with lies.
Was this the cottage and the safe abode
Thou told'st me of? What grim aspects are these,
These ugly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me!
Hence with thy brewed enchantments, foul deceiver!
Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence
With vizored falsehood and base forgery?
And wouldst thou seek again to trap me here
With lickerish baits, fit to ensnare a brute?
Were it a draught for Juno when she banquets,
I would not taste thy treasonous offer. None
But such as are good men can give good things;
And that which is not good is not delicious
To a well-governed and wise appetite.

Comus. O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
To those budge doctors of the Stoic fur,
And fetch their precepts from the Cynic tub,

Praising the lean and sallow Abstinence!
Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth
With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks,
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,
But all to please and sate the curious taste?
And set to work millions of spinning worms,
That in their green shops weave the smooth-haired silk,
To deck her sons; and, that no corner might
Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins
She hutched the all-worshipped ore and precious gems,
To store her children with. If all the world
Should, in a pet of temperance, feed on pulse,
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,
The All-giver would be unthanked, would be unpraised,
Not half his riches known, and yet despised;
And we should serve him as a grudging master,
As a penurious niggard of his wealth,
And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons,
Who would be quite surcharged with her own weight,
And strangled with her waste fertility:
The earth cumbered, and the winged air darked with plumes,
The herds would over-multitude their lords;
The sea o'erfraught would swell, and the unsought diamonds
Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep,
And so bestud with stars, that they below
Would grow inured to light, and come at last
To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.
List, Lady; be not coy, and be not cozened
With that same vaunted name, Virginity.
Beauty is Nature's coin; must not be hoarded,
But must be current; and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,

Unsavoury in the enjoyment of itself.
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
It withers on the stalk with languished head.
Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown
In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,
Where most may wonder at the workmanship.
It is for homely features to keep home;
They had their name thence: coarse complexions
And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply
The sampler, and to tease the huswife's wool.
What need a vermeil-tinctured lip for that,
Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn?
There was another meaning in these gifts;
Think what, and be advised; you are but young yet.
Lady. I had not thought to have unlocked my lips
In this unhallowed air, but that this juggler
Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,
Obtruding false rules pranked in reason's garb.
I hate when vice can bolt her arguments
And virtue has no tongue to check her pride.
Impostor! do not charge most innocent Nature,
As if she would her children should be riotous
With her abundance. She, good cateress,
Means her provision only to the good,
That live according to her sober laws,
And holy dictate of spare Temperance.
If every just man that now pines with want
Had but a moderate and beseeming share
Of that which lewdly-pampered Luxury
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
Nature's full blessings would be well-dispensed
In unsuperfluous even proportion,
And she no whit encumbered with her store;

And then the Giver would be better thanked,
His praise due paid: for swinish gluttony
Ne'er looks to Heaven amidst his gorgeous feast,
But with besotted base ingratitude
Crams, and blasphemes his Feeder. Shall I go on?
Or have I said enow? To him that dares
Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
Against the sun-clad power of chastity
Fain would I something say;—yet to what end?
Thou hast nor ear, nor soul, to apprehend
The sublime notion and high mystery
That must be uttered to unfold the sage
And serious doctrine of Virginity;
And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know
More happiness than this thy present lot.
Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetoric,
That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence;
Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced.
Yet, should I try, the uncontrollèd worth
Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
To such a flame of sacred vehemence
That dumb things would be moved to sympathize,
And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and shake,
Till all thy magic structures, reared so high,
Were shattered into heaps o'er thy false head.

Comus. She fables not. I feel that I do fear
Her words set off by some superior power;
And, though not mortal, yet a cold shuddering dew
Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove
Speaks thunder and the chains of Erebus
To some of Saturn's crew. I must dissemble,
And try her yet more strongly.—Come, no more!
This is mere moral babble, and direct

Against the canon laws of our foundation.
I must not suffer this; yet 'tis but the lees
And settlings of a melancholy blood.
But this will cure all straight; one sip of this
Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight
Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste . . .

The BROTHERS *rush in with swords drawn, wrest his glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground: his rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven in. The* ATTENDANT SPIRIT *comes in.*

Spir. What! have you let the false enchanter scape?
O ye mistook; ye should have snatched his wand,
And bound him fast. Without his rod reversed,
And backward mutters of dissevering power,
We cannot free the Lady that sits here
In stony fetters fixed and motionless.
Yet stay: be not disturbed; now I bethink me,
Some other means I have which may be used,
Which once of Melibœus old I learnt,
The soothest shepherd that e'er piped on plains.
There is a gentle Nymph not far from hence,
That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream:
Sabrina is her name: a virgin pure;
Whilom she was the daughter of Locrine,
That had the sceptre from his father Brute.
She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
Of her enragèd stepdame, Guendolen,
Commended her fair innocence to the flood
That stayed her flight with his cross-flowing course.
The water-nymphs, that in the bottom played,
Held up their pearled wrists, and took her in,
Bearing her straight to aged Nereus' hall;
Who, piteous of her woes, reared her lank head,

And gave her to his daughters to imbathe
In nectared lavers strewed with asphodil,
And through the porch and inlet of each sense
Dropt in ambrosial oils, till she revived,
And underwent a quick immortal change,
Made Goddess of the river. Still she retains
Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve
Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,
Helping all urchin blasts, and ill-luck signs
That the shrewd meddling elf delights to make,
Which she with precious vialed liquors heals:
For which the shepherds, at their festivals,
Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,
And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream
Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils.
And, as the old swain said, she can unlock
The clasping charm, and thaw the numbing spell,
If she be right invoked in warbled song;
For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift
To aid a virgin, such as was herself,
In hard-besetting need. This will I try,
And add the power of some adjuring verse.

Song.

Sabrina fair,
Listen where thou art sitting
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
In twisted braids of lilies knitting
The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair;
Listen for dear honour's sake,
Goddess of the silver lake,
Listen and save!

Listen, and appear to us,
In name of great Oceanus,
By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace,
And Tethys' grave majestic pace;
By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,
And the Carpathian wizard's hook;
By scaly Triton's winding shell,
And old soothsaying Glaucus' spell;
By Leucothea's lovely hands,
And her son that rules the strands;
By Thetis' tinsel-slippered feet,
And the songs of Sirens sweet;
By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,
And fair Ligea's golden comb,
Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks
Sleeking her soft alluring locks;
By all the nymphs that nightly dance
Upon thy streams with wily glance;
Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head
From thy coral-paven bed,
And bridle in thy headlong wave,
Till thou our summons answered have.
Listen and save!

SABRINA *rises, attended by Water-nymphs, and sings.*

By the rushy-fringèd bank,
Where grows the willow and the osier dank,
My sliding chariot stays,
Thick set with agate, and the azurn sheen
Of turkis blue, and emerald green,
That in the channel strays:
Whilst from off the waters fleet
Thus I set my printless feet

O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
That bends not as I tread.
Gentle swain, at thy request
I am here!
Spir. Goddess dear,
We implore thy powerful hand
To undo the charmèd band
Of true virgin here distressed
Through the force and through the wile
Of unblessed enchanter vile.
Sabr. Shepherd, 'tis my office best
To help ensnared chastity.
Brightest Lady, look on me.
Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
Drops that from my fountain pure
I have kept of precious cure;
Thrice upon thy finger's tip,
Thrice upon thy rubied lip:
Next this marble venomed seat,
Smeared with gums of glutinous heat,
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold.
Now the spell hath lost his hold;
And I must haste ere morning hour
To wait in Amphitrite's bower.

SABRINA *descends, and* THE LADY *rises out of her seat.*

Spir. Virgin, daughter of Locrine,
Sprung of old Anchises' line,
May thy brimmèd waves for this
Their full tribute never miss
From a thousand petty rills,
That tumble down the snowy hills:

Summer drouth or singèd air
Never scorch thy tresses fair,
Nor wet October's torrent flood
Thy molten crystal fill with mud;
May thy billows roll ashore
The beryl and the golden ore;
May thy lofty head be crowned
With many a tower and terrace round,
And here and there thy banks upon
With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.
Come, Lady; while Heaven lends us grace,
Let us fly this cursed place,
Lest the sorcerer us entice
With some other new device.
Not a waste or needless sound
Till we come to holier ground.
I shall be your faithful guide
Through this gloomy covert wide;
And not many furlongs thence
Is your Father's residence,
Where this night are met in state
Many a friend to gratulate
His wished presence, and beside
All the swains that there abide
With jigs and rural dance resort.
We shall catch them at their sport,
And our sudden coming there
Will double all their mirth and cheer.
Come, let us haste; the stars grow high,
But Night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.

The Scene changes, presenting Ludlow Town, and the President's Castle: then come in Country Dancers; after them the ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *with the two* BROTHERS *and* THE LADY.

Song.

Spir. Back, shepherds, back! Enough your play
Till next sun-shine holiday.
Here be, without duck or nod,
Other trippings to be trod
Of lighter toes, and such court guise
As Mercury did first devise
With the mincing Dryades
On the lawns and on the leas.

This second Song presents them to their Father and Mother.

Noble Lord and Lady bright,
I have brought ye new delight.
Here behold so goodly grown
Three fair branches of your own.
Heaven hath timely tried their youth,
Their faith, their patience, and their truth,
And sent them here through hard assays
With a crown of deathless praise,
To triumph in victorious dance
O'er sensual folly and intemperance.

The dances ended, the SPIRIT *epilogizes.*

Spir. To the ocean now I fly,
And those happy climes that lie
Where day never shuts his eye,
Up in the broad fields of the sky.

There I suck the liquid air,
All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three
That sing about the golden tree.
Along the crispèd shades and bowers
Revels the spruce and jocund Spring;
The Graces and the rosy-bosomed Hours
Thither all their bounties bring.
There eternal Summer dwells,
And west winds with musky wing
About the cedarn alleys fling
Nard and cassia's balmy smells.
Iris there with humid bow
Waters the odorous banks, that blow
Flowers of more mingled hue
Than her purfled scarf can shew,
And drenches with Elysian dew
(List, mortals, if your ears be true)
Beds of hyacinth and roses,
Where young Adonis oft reposes,
Waxing well of his deep wound,
In slumber soft, and on the ground
Sadly sits the Assyrian queen.
But far above, in spangled sheen,
Celestial Cupid, her famed son, advanced
Holds his dear Psyche, sweet entranced,
After her wandering labours long,
Till free consent the gods among
Make her his eternal bride,
And from her fair unspotted side
Two blissful twins are to be born,
Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.

But now my task is smoothly done:
I can fly, or I can run
Quickly to the green earth's end,
Where the bowed welkin slow doth bend,
And from thence can soar as soon
To the corners of the moon.
Mortals, that would follow me,
Love Virtue: she alone is free.
She can teach ye how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime;
Or if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

NOTES.

ARCADES.

Title. Presented to, i.e. represented before. For *present* cf. the direction at the beginning of *Comus*, *The chief Persons which presented.*

Dowager. Properly *dowager* means 'a widow with a jointure;' coined from *dowage*='an endowment.' The first part of the word is obviously French *dou-er*, from *dotare*. Cf. Lat. *dos*, allied to *do*, *dare;* and *dower*=O. F. *doaire*, later *douaire*=*dotarium*. *Age* (*dow-age-r*) is the French form of Latin *aticum*, not, as is sometimes stated, of Low Lat. *agium*. Thus *viaticum*=*voyage:* Low Lat. *carnaticum*=*carnage;* and so forth. Then from *age* to *ager* was an easy step: *cottage—cottage-r*, *dowage—dowage-r*. In modern E. the strict meaning of *dowager* is lost: the word merely distinguishes the widow of a nobleman from the wife of the heir who succeeds to his title. Shakespeare, however, uses *dowager* with much closer reference to its proper sense. Cf. *Midsummer N. D.* I. 1. 5:

"A dowager
Long withering out a young man's revenue;"

i. e. a widow who by living on keeps the heir out of the estate. So the same scene, 159:

"A dowager
Of great revenue."

For the other use cf. *Henry VIII.* III. 2. 70, IV. 1. 23, passages which Shakespeare may, or may not, have written.

Habit, i.e. dress. See *Comus*, 157, note.

Seat of State, i.e. the raised throne over which rested a canopy. Cf. *Henry VIII.* IV. 1. 67:

"While her grace sat down
To rest awhile, some half an hour or so,
In a rich chair of state."

Sometimes we have *state* alone with the same sense; e.g. in *Macbeth* III. 4. 5:

"Our hostess keeps her state."

At the performance of a Masque, or out-of-doors entertainment such as was *Arcades*, this seat of dignity, occupied by the person in whose honour the festivity was given, stood in a central position facing the stage. Cf. the following stage-directions: Shirley's *Triumph of Peace:* "At the lower end of the room, opposite to the State, was raised a stage with a descent of stairs in two branches leading into the room;" where Dyce's footnote is, "i.e. the raised platform on which were placed the royal seats under a Canopy"—Shirley's *Works*, VI. p. 262. Again: "The Great Hall (wherein the Masque was presented) received this division, and order. The upper part where the cloth and chair of state were placed, had scaffolds and seats on either side"—*Masque of the Marriage of the Lord Hayes*, by the Cambridge Musician Thomas Campion, Bullen's ed. p. 150.

State might also signify the canopy by itself; cf. *P. L.* X. 445:

"Under state
Of richest texture spread."

Cotgrave indeed implied that it first meant the covering, then the throne; but there is nothing to prove this. Cf. his explanation of *dais* or *daiz:* "A cloth of Estate, Canopie or Heauen, that stands ouer the heads of Princes thrones, also, the whole State or seat of Estate." In any case the canopy would be made of very rich material; cf. Giles Fletcher's *Christ's Victorie in Heaven*, 61:

"Over her hung a Canopie of State
Not of rich tissew, nor of spangled gold"

(Grosart's ed. p. 119); the implication being that these textures were usually employed. No doubt the simple expression *State* was an abbreviation of *Chair of State; state* in the latter having its common meaning 'splendour,' 'pomp.' Note that in sixteenth century English we get *estate* and *state* in the same sense. Cf. Cotgrave above and Spenser, *F. Q.* VI. 2. 27 "discovering my estate." Afterwards the forms split up, *estate* in modern E. being practically confined to the meaning 'property.' *Estate* is the commoner in early E., from O. F. *estat*, Lat. *statum*. Latin initial *st* became *est*—cf. O. F. *ester* from *stare*—just as *sp* was lengthened to *esp*—cf. *espérer* from *sperare*. The abbreviated form *state* represents the tendency to drop an unaccented syllable at the

beginning of a word; cf. the double forms *strange*, *estrange*—squire, esquire. Morris, *Outlines*, pp. 76, 77.

Song. Sung by one member of the band of Masquers; not by them all.

1. As pointed out elsewhere, *Comus* 966, this practice of addressing from the stage some noble person in the audience was quite regular.

5. *This, this is she.* The line would have a familiar ring for the Countess of Derby. Ben Jonson had written in *The Satyr:*

> "This is she, this is she
> In whose world of grace
> Every season, person, place,
> That receive her happy be."

The Satyr was Ben Jonson's first *Entertainment* (Ward, *Dramatic Literature*, I. p. 524). It was performed in June, 1603, before the queen, Anne of Denmark, wife of James I., on her way to London. The scene was Althorpe near Northampton, the country seat of Sir John Spencer, father of the future Countess of Derby. Doubtless she was present on that occasion, and the words would now be a pleasant reminiscence. The editors note too that Marston has a very similar verse —perhaps with the same graceful purpose—in the Masque presented by Lord and Lady Huntingdon (her daughter) before the Countess in 1607. Milton may have remembered *Arcades* when many years later he began the first chorus in *S. A.:*

> "This, this is he; softly awhile;
> Let us not break in upon him," 115, 116.

6—7. As though she were a deity to whom their adoration should be directed.

8—13. Spenser, as we have said (*Introduction*), had more than once celebrated the beauty and noble character of the Countess.

It was to her that he dedicated the *Teares of the Muses* 1591, not forgetting to claim kinship with the house of Spencer, a claim which was allowed. Again, in *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* lines 536—583 refer to the Countess—then Lady Strange—and her sisters.

9. *Lavish.* From an obsolete verb *lave*='pour out,' whence, by a metaphor, *the idea of giving* bountifully. Confused, but not cognate, *with lave, Lat. lavo.* See *Comus* 465, note.

10—14. These lines at first stood rather differently. Fame, said the poet,

"Now seems guilty of abuse
And detraction from her praise:
Less than half she hath expressed;
Envy bid her hide the rest." *Cambridge MS.*

The difference between the original and the substituted lines does not seem great; though *abuse* in the first couplet was rather a strong word.

14—15. Partly metaphorical, partly a flattering reference to the splendid assemblage grouped round the throne of the Countess. *State* in Shakespeare often = 'the attendants on a great person;' hence his 'household,' 'court.' Cf. *Henry VIII.* v. 2. 24:

"His grace of Canterbury,
Who holds his state at door."

20. *Latona*, i.e. Leto, the mother of Apollo and Artemis; cf. Milton's seventh sonnet:

"Railed at Latona's twin-born progeny,
Which after held the Sun and Moon in fee."

Leto = 'the concealed' or 'obscure,' and from the fact that she gave birth to the deities of the sun and moon "her whole legend seems to indicate nothing else but the issuing from darkness to light," *Dict. of Mythology*. Perhaps *wise* because the goddess of obscurity. The point of the comparison is, that from the Countess of Derby has descended a brilliant line of sons and daughters, just as from Latona were born Apollo and Artemis. The verse therefore conveys a twofold compliment, to the Countess and the family assembled round her.

21, 22. *Towered Cybele.* Cybele, or Rhea, or Berecynthia, was the wife of Saturn, and mother of Jupiter, Juno, Neptune and other deities: hence Milton's "mother of a hundred gods." In classical writers she often appears as the μεγάλη μήτηρ.

Towered reproduces Vergil's *turrita* in *Æneid* VI. 785, a passage which may have suggested the present:

qualis Berecynthia mater
Invehitur curru Phrygias turrita per urbes,
Læta deum partu, centum complexa nepotes,
Omnes cælicolas.

Cf. Spenser, Ruines of Rome VI.:

"Such as the Berecynthian Goddesse bright,
In her swifte charret with high turrets crownde."

Line 62 of Milton's *Elegia Quinta* is a rather forced reference to the same idea, which in works of art is symbolised by the crown on the head of the goddess. The Countess of Derby might fairly be compared to Cybele because (i) she had *centum nepotes*, (ii) she probably wore her coronet and was therefore *turrita*. Masson notes (III. 391) that the recumbent figure of this lady in Harefield church bears a very beautiful crown.

23. *Juno*, i.e. the queen of heaven herself. In the *Cambridge MS.* the name is changed several times. Milton first wrote *Juno*, then erased it in favour of *Ceres*, and finally came back to the original.

Odds, i.e. advantage. Juno could not concede anything in her favour: if they contended it would have to be on equal terms. *Odds* often bears this sense in Shakespeare; "thou hast the odds of me," *Titus Andronicus*, V. 2. 19; "and with that odds he weighs King Richard down," *Richard III.* III. 4. 89. The Icelandic word *oddi*= "a triangle, a point of land; metaphorically (from the triangle) an odd number" (Skeat). Allied to Icelandic *oddr* 'a point.'

The Genius of the Wood. Not an unfamiliar character in Masques. Cf. "here comes Sylvanus, god of these woods, whose presence is rare, and imports some novelty,"—Campion's *Entertainment Given by the Lord Knowles*, Bullen's ed. 158. This *rex nemorensis* was useful as a *deus ex machina*.

26. *Gentle Swains*, i.e. the gentlemen who took part in the entertainment. The ladies are mentioned lower down, 33.

For explains *gentle:* outwardly they may be swains; only he can tell that they are 'gentle,' i.e. well-born. The adjective has lost this sense except in the compound *gentleman* and the phrase "of gentle birth." Shakespeare uses *gentility*='good extraction,' *As You L. I.* I. 1. 22; *gentles*='gentlefolk,' *Love's L. L.* IV. 2. 172; and *gentle* as a verb='ennoble,' *Henry V.* IV. 3. 63:

> "be he ne'er so vile,
> This day shall gentle his condition."

Gentilis, 'belonging to the same clan' (*gens*), fared in French much as in English. *Gentil* keeps the idea of birth in *gentilhomme*, which we half appropriated as *gentleman;* for the rest *gentil*='pretty;' cf. *gentle*='kind.'

28. *Famous Arcady.* Having called his piece Arcades 'the Arcadians,' Milton was in duty bound to celebrate Arcadia, the ideal land of pastoral life and pastoral associations.

Famous, because from the classics downwards its praises had so often been sung. Everybody was familiar with the beauties of the country since everybody read Sidney's *Arcadia* (published in 1590, but written about 1580), though some people may have agreed with Milton that the great Elizabethan romance was a "vain and amatorious poem" (*Eikonoclastes*). Gabriel Harvey sneeringly suggested that Greene, his Cambridge contemporary, should paint an alternative picture of Arcadia and then rewrite the *Faerie Queene* (cf. Symonds' *Shakspere's Predecessors*, p. 551).

29—31. Alpheus was a river in *Arcadia*. The legend said that a hunter named Alpheus fell in love with Arethusa, one of the nymphs attendant on Diana. To escape from him she was changed into a fountain whose waters flowed under the earth and rose again at Ortygia in Sicily, near Syracuse. Alpheus, however, was metamorphosed into a river, and imitating her example passed under the Adriatic to unite with the nymph in the fountain Arethusa. Probably the myth arose from the fact that the river Alpheus goes underground not far from its source, reappearing at some distance.

29. *So often sung*, e.g. by Vergil, *Æneid* III. 694—96:

Alpheum fama est huc Elidis amnem
Occultas egisse vias subter mare, qui nunc
Ore, Arethusa, tuo Siculis confunditur undis.

Cf. *Lyc.*, lines 85 and 132, where Arethusa and Alpheus are treated as names symbolical of pastoral verse, especially of the type of pastoral elegy which in *Lyc.* Milton borrowed from the Sicilian singers Theocritus, Bion and Moschus. Shelley among modern poets has told the Alpheus legend in his exquisite lyric:

"Arethusa arose
From her couch of snows."—

30. *Divine;* because a river-god.

Secret sluice, i.e. subterranean channel. Todd notes that this curious phrase is found in Sylvester's *Du Bartas* (1598), a work which Milton had studied very closely. See *Comus* 132. *Sluice* is O. F. *escluse*, modern *écluse;* cf. *recluse* from O. F. *recluse*. *Escluse* (Spanish *esclusa*) is from Low Lat. *exclusa*, i.e. *exclusa aqua*, shut-off water. Brachet says: "*exclusa aqua*...is used thus in Fortunatus and several *Merovingian* documents;" and if we turn to Du Cange we find the *following* line from Fortunatus, X. 12:

Inde per exclusas cauta rate pergimus undas.

Afterwards *exclusa*, from signifying the water shut off, came to mean the place where this was done, i.e. the mill-dam or flood-gate. Cf. Du Cange, s.v. *exclusa*: "*escluse, clusa, Locus ubi concluduntur aquæ. Conclusio aquarum.*" Apparently in English *sluice* has always been a monosyllable, the *es* or *ex* dropping out, perhaps from the awkwardness of the sound. French retained the preposition; i.e. in O. F. *escluse*, in modern F. *écluse*, the accent (*é*) representing lost *s*, as *écrire* for *escrire*. But in Low Latin the abbreviation—*exclusa* to *sclusa* or *clusa*, had taken place; cf. Du Cange, *supra*, and Brachet's quotation from the *Lex Salica*: "*si quis sclusam de moliendo alieno rumperit.*" To us the rhyme *sluice—Arethuse* seems awkward, since *sluice* has the sound of the light *s* (as in *recluse*) whereas the *s* in *Arethusa* is a *z*. Most likely the pronunciation of *sluice* has changed; in Milton's time it may have = *sluze*.

32. *Breathing.* Perhaps 'fragrant' is the sense; cf. the *Ode to Evening*, by Collins:

> "And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest eve."

Collins has the epithet frequently.

33. *Silver-buskined.* No doubt, literally true of the dresses of the ladies. *Buskined stage* in *Il Pen.* 102 stands for 'Tragedy,' the Muse of which wears the buskin (*cothurnus*), while her sister Comedy prefers the sock (cf. *L' Al.*, 132, and the *Glosse* to the *Shepheards Calender, October*). *Buskin* is a Dutch word and a good example of metathesis; it should be *bruskin* or *burskin*, the letter *r* being very liable to shift its place. See the instances given in Professor Skeat's *Principles of Etymology*, p. 376. The Middle Dutch form is *broosken*, i.e. a diminutive of *broos*, 'a legging.' English has a considerable number of Dutch words, introduced in different ways at different times. Several are sea-terms, such as *sloop, yacht, reef, skipper, smack;* some of the cant-terms used by the Elizabethans were Dutch; and not a few words still current, e.g. *deck, fop, frolic, jeer, uproar, waggon*, found their way into England during Elizabeth's reign, through the wars in the Netherlands against Spain. Thus George Gascoigne (author of *The Steel Glass*) and Ben Jonson, after they left the University (Cambridge), served as volunteers in Flanders, picked up stray words (mostly military), and on their return naturalised them. The same thing would be done by other travellers. See Skeat's *Principles*, *pp. 481—485, or his Concise Dictionary*, where, p. 607, a full list of *these importations is given.*

34. *Quest*, i.e. search; cf. Cotgrave: "*Queste:* A quest, inquirie, search, inquisition, seeking." *Quest*=O. F. *queste* (modern *quête*)= *quæsita* (*res*), a thing sought.

41. The Genius is made to repeat what had been said in the introductory song, stanza 11.

44. *By lot*, i.e. by appointment. For the same phrase in a rather different sense cf. *Comus* 20. *Lot* is A. S. *hlot;* for loss of initial *h* in *hl*, *hn*, and *hr*, see note on *lank*, *Comus* 836. Cognate with Germ. *loos*. The *Attendant Spirit* in *Comus* 41 announces himself as the minister of "sovran Jove."

46. *Curl*, 'adorn.' *Curl* is used in allusion to the metaphor in *ringlets*. What the deity does amounts in plain prose to this: he makes the young trees ('saplings') grow tall and strong, decks the grove with creepers and undergrowth, and intersperses it with winding paths. *Ringlets* is intentionally vague and fanciful; it just suggests the tangled growth of a forest—foliage, creepers and so forth. *Curl* is from the Low German (to be more correct, Friesic) *krul;* in Middle E. spelt *crul*. For the shifting of the *r* see l. 33. Probably cognate with *crook*. "Middle English," we may explain, signifies in Skeat's words, "English from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries inclusive."

47. *Quaint*, i.e. dainty, pretty; see *Comus*, 157. The alliteration of the verse is in the manner of the author of *Atalanta in Calydon*. Perhaps *w* is treated alliteratively more than any other letter; cf. the case of *v* in Latin. To Milton the sound was especially grateful; cf. the *Nativity Ode*, 51, 52:

> "And, waving wide her myrtle wand,
> She strikes a universal peace through sea and land;"

and again 64,

> "The winds, with wonder whist."

So *P. R.* 1. 221. Cf. for a different sound line 61 *infra*. Masson notes that a couplet in the *Faerie Queene*, 1. 2. 13, has much the same ring as the present verse:

> "Her wanton palfrey all was overspred
> With tinsell trappings, woven like a wave."

The history of alliteration in English is interesting. In Saxon poetry this trick of language occupied the place of rhyme, and as late as the fourteenth century we find it holding its ground against the rhymed iambic couplet (Earle's *English Tongue*, p. 608). During that century

rhyme prevailed, but alliteration still exercised a very strong influence. Cf., for example, some of Gascoigne's works (1536—1577), and pieces in *Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557. By Shakespeare's time alliteration was spoken of as a mark of pedantry. It became a phase of Euphuism. When the University wits, Gabriel Harvey of Trinity Hall and Thomas Nash of St John's College, the ablest of contemporary satirists, fell out, the former taunted his adversary with imitating Greene, who in turn had imitated Lyly; to which Nash replied; "Did I ever stuff my style with herbs and stones [This alludes to Lyly's way of illustrating his remarks by absurd similes drawn from an impossible natural history], or apprentice myself to the running of the letter?"—*Shakspere's Predecessors*, p. 552. Shakespeare again, sketching the character of a pedant, makes Holofernes "affect the letter," *Love's L. L.* IV. 1. 56, and ridicules alliteration in *Midsummer N. D.* V. 2, and elsewhere. Yet Shakespeare himself sometimes ventures to write a line like the following:

"Fear'd by their breed, and famous for their birth,"
Richard II. II. 1. 52.

Spenser presents still more striking and frequent examples. We may perhaps conclude that in the English of Shakespeare and Milton occasional alliteration was permissible; if it became a mannerism (as it has become in much modern verse) public taste dissented and condemned the use.

47—53. Cf. *Comus*, 843—47, and the address to Pan in *Endymion* I:

"Breather round our farms,
To keep off mildews, and all weather harms."

50. Cf. Gray's *Elegy*, 99:

"Brushing with hasty steps the dew away." So *P. L.* V. 429.

51. *Thwarting.* Perhaps in its literal sense 'crossing,' i.e. lightning which runs zig-zag athwart the heaven; cf. Shakespeare's "Cross blue lightning," *Julius Cæsar* I. 3. 50; and *Lear* IV. 7. 35 "Quick cross lightning." In *Pericles* IV. 4. 10 *thwart*='pass over:'

"Pericles
Is now again thwarting the wayward seas."

From the notion 'crossing' comes the secondary and common sense 'hindering,' which, of course, would suit here: the thunder damages the growth of the forest and field. Properly *thwart* was an adverb;

then an adjective, cf. *Lear* I. 4. 305; lastly a verb. A Scandinavian word.

52. *Cross*, i.e. the planet whose evil aspect (*dire-looking*) brings crosses or troubles. This seems more probable than *cross* = 'vexed.' The reference is to Saturn, the morose, malign planet. Men born under Saturn (like Conrade in *Much Ado* I. 3. 12) are surly-tempered, in fact, *Saturnine*. In *Il Pen.* (24) Milton makes Saturn the father of Melancholy; and in the *Epitaphium Damonis*, 78—80, he celebrates the evil influence of the planet:

> *Aut te perdit amor, aut te male fascinat astrum;*
> *Saturni grave sæpe fuit pastoribus astrum*
> *Intimaque obliquo figit præcordia plumbo.*

In one of the finest passages of his *History of the World* (quoted in Saintsbury's *Elizabethan Literature*, pp. 214, 215) Raleigh compares the seven ages of man—Shakespeare in *As You Like It*, II. 7. 143—166, merely worked up an old-world idea—to the seven planets. "The sixth age," he says, "is ascribed to Jupiter; in which we begin to take account of our times, judge of ourselves, and grow to the perfection of our understanding. The last and seventh, to Saturn; wherein our days are sad and overcast; and in which we find by dear and lamentable experience, and by the loss which can never be repaired; that, of all our vain passions and affections past, the sorrow only abideth."

Smites. Compare Shakespeare's use of *strike*, to signify the harmful influence exercised by the planets; e.g. in *Hamlet* I. 1. 162, *Coriolanus* II. 2. 117.

53. i.e. the worm that preys on blossoms, especially roses; often called *canker* by Shakespeare. By a metaphor it came to signify any corroding evil. Lat. *cancer* (a 'crab'—also an 'eating tumour') was one of the Latin words of the 'Second Period' (i.e. roughly speaking, from A.D. 596—1000) which established themselves in Anglo-Saxon; that is to say, *canker* did not come to us through the French; it was naturalized in Old English before the Conquest. The English were converted to Christianity about 596 A.D., and many Latin words were introduced by Roman ecclesiastics and English writers translating from the Latin: Morris, *Outlines of English Accidence*, 28, 29. *Cancer*, the disease, is the same word, the difference in meaning being shown by *difference in spelling*, *c* for *k*.

Venom: from O. F. *venim*, i.e. *venenum*. The form venym occurs in *Piers the Plowman* and Chaucer; cf. Mayhew and Skeat's Middle

English Dict. s. v. Lat. *e*=French *i* (ven-*e*-num) is seen in various words; e.g. *mercedem*=*merci*. But *venim* is noticeable because the change *e* to *i* does not often take place before a nasal.

54. *Fetch*, i.e. make: "I'll fetch a turn about the garden"='take a walk,' *Cymbeline* I. 1. 81. *Fetch* in this sense must long have been in current use; cf. Congreve's *Way of the World* (1700) IV. 4, "I made bold to see, to come, and know if that how you were disposed to fetch a walk this evening." We still speak of a vessel 'fetching its course' by any point, i.e. steering by it.

55. *Over the mount.* Masson reminds us that Harefield House stood on a slight slope. Milton may have been there. Horton is only ten miles from Harefield, and *Arcades* was probably written at the former.

57. Cf. *L' All.* 53, 54 and Gray's *Elegy*, 19, 20. There would be tassels hanging from the horn of the huntsman. Cf. the *Faerie Queene*, I. 8. 3:

> "Then took that Squire an horn of bugle small,
> Which hung adowne his side in twisted gold
> And tasselles gay."

Trumpeters on state-occasions often have ornamental cloths attached to their instruments. O. F. *tassel* (the modern word being *tasseau*, but rarely used in this sense) is from Lat. *taxillus*, the diminutive of *talus*, 'a die.' Apparently a *tassel* was a piece of stuff cut in such a way as to resemble a die. *Tassel* applied to a hawk, i.e. the male bird (cf. Shakespeare's *tassel-gentle* in *Romeo and Juliet* II. 2. 160), is a corruption of *tiercel* or *tercel*. May the spelling of one word have influenced that of the other? This frequently happens with words wholly distinct in meaning and origin, but somewhat alike in sound. Cf. note on *alabaster*, *Comus* 660.

59. *Ranks*, i.e. the metaphor of a general inspecting a regiment. He 'numbers' them to see that none are missing.

60. *Murmurs*, i.e. muttered charms. Cf. *Comus* 526:

> "His baneful cup
> With many murmurs mixt."

62. *Locked up mortal sense.* Substituted in the Cambridge MS. for the first reading—*chained mortality.*

Mortal sense=the senses of mortals, in particular their sense of hearing.

63. *Sirens'.* Even educated people often write syren under the

impression that they are retaining the Greek form; the latter being, as a matter of fact, *σειρήν*. Cf. the misspelling *tyro*, for Latin *tiro*. The letters *i* and *y* have suffered much from these false notions of etymology. Thus we get *style* instead of *stile* because it was supposed that Latin *stilus* was derived from Gk *στῦλος*. So again with *sylvan*, due to the idea that Lat. *silva* came from Gk *ὕλη* and should therefore be written *sylva*. See Skeat upon "Etymological Spelling," *Principles* pp. 326—28. French gives the correct form *sirène*.

64. *Sphere* is a word of very frequent occurrence in Milton. Many passages—and this is one—are unintelligible unless we know what he meant by it. In Milton's time the Copernican system of astronomy was not generally approved. Milton himself did not, seemingly, accept it, although two passages in *P. L.* (IV. 592—597, and VIII. 15—178) show that he was quite familiar with the arguments in its favour (Masson). Certainly for the purposes of his great poem he adopts the old Ptolemaic or Alphonsine System. The astronomer Ptolemy of Alexandria held that the Earth was the fixed centre of the Mundane Universe; and that the central Earth was enclosed at different distances by eight successive Spheres of space. Seven of these Spheres were the Spheres or Orbs of the Seven Planets—in this order, if we start from the central Earth: the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Outside the last of these Spheres (i.e. Saturn) was an eighth Sphere, namely the Firmament in which were set the fixed stars. This eighth Sphere moved from East to West, completing a revolution in twenty-four hours; it carried with it the Seven inside Spheres, though the latter were supposed to have separate motions of their own. This system was considered satisfactory up till the Middle Ages. Afterwards a ninth Sphere was added, viz. the Crystalline Sphere, outside the Firmament or Sphere of the fixed Stars. Finally the number was brought up to ten by a supplementary tenth Sphere, the Primum Mobile, enclosing all the others.

The development of the Ptolemaic system from eight to ten spheres was associated with the name of the Astronomer, Alphonsus X. of Castille —1252—1284. Hence it is sometimes called the Alphonsine System. Now, whenever writers who lived prior to the middle of the XVIIth century—Marlowe, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson and others—use the word *sphere*, they are referring not to the modern Copernican theory of the *Universe, but* this obsolete Ptolemaic or Alphonsine System. It does *not make much* difference how many spheres they recognise: Marlowe *allows nine in Faustus* II. 2; Ben Jonson only eight in the Sad Shepherd

III. 2. *Sphere*, in any case, had for these writers associations which are now lost. (Abridged from Masson.)

With regard to this long and at first sight difficult passage, lines 62—71, it may be explained that Milton is adapting part of Plato's account of the Myth of Er in the tenth book of the *Republic* 616—617. Plato says—and we should note how closely Milton follows the original—

"They looked down upon a straight pillar of light, stretching across the whole heaven and earth, more like the rainbow than anything else, only brighter and clearer. This they reached when they had gone forward a day's journey; and, arriving at the centre of the light, they saw that its extremities were fastened by chains to the sky. For this light binds the sky together, like the hawser that strengthens a trireme, and thus holds together the whole revolving universe. To the extremities is fastened the distaff of Necessity, by means of which all the revolutions of the universe are kept up. The shaft and hook of this distaff are made of steel; the whorl is a compound of steel and other materials. The nature of the whorl may be thus described. In shape it is like an ordinary whorl; but from Er's account we must picture it to ourselves under the form of a large hollow whorl, scooped out right through, into which a similar, but smaller, whorl is nicely inserted, like those boxes which fit into one another. In the same way a third whorl is inserted within the second, a fourth within the third, and so on to four more. For in all there are eight whorls, inserted into one another...and all together forming one solid whorl embracing the shaft, which is passed right through the centre of the eighth." Then follows a description of these whorls or spheres—their size, colour; and he continues: "The distaff spins round upon the knees of Necessity. Upon each of its circles stands a siren, who travels round with the circle, uttering one note in one tone; and from all the eight notes there results a single harmony. At equal distances around sit three other personages, each on a throne. These are the daughters of Necessity, the Fates, Lachesis, Clotho, Atropos; who, clothed in white robes, with garlands on their heads, chant to the music of the sirens, Lachesis the events of the past, Clotho those of the present, Atropos those of the future. Clotho with her right hand takes hold of the outermost rim of the distaff, and twirls it altogether, at intervals; and Atropos with her left hand twirls the inner circles in like manner; while *Lachesis takes hold* of each in turn with either hand."

Davies and Vaughan, 364—66.

Infolded, because, as Plato says, they are inserted one within the other, after the fashion of a puzzle.

65. *To those*, i.e. the Destinies;

> "Those three fatall Sisters, whose sad hands
> Doo weave the direfull threds of destinie,
> And in their wrath breake off the vitall bands."
>
> Spenser, *Daphnaïda*, 16—18.

The shears (which, strictly, were not held by the three Μοῖραι, but only by Atropos—cf. the old line *Clotho colum retinet, Lachesis net, et Atropos occat*) are 'vital' because they sever the threads of life (*vita*); cf. *Lyc.* 75

> "Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears."

In *Midsummer N. D.* v. 1. 89—92 the Destinies are made fun of. We may remember that the classicism of this passage, with its recondite references, would for most of Milton's hearers present no difficulty, since the Fates were not unfamiliar figures among the *dramatis personae* of Masque-writers. Thus a stage direction in Ben Jonson's *Entertainment at Theobalds*, 1607, mentions the entry of "The Three Parcæ, the one holding the rock, the other the spindle, and the third the shears, with a book of Adamant lying open before them." Campion, again, in the *Masque for the Marriage of the Earl of Somerset*, 1613, introduces "the three Destinies, in long robes of white taffeta;...and in their left hands they carried distaffs"—Bullen's *Campion*, 218. Each extract suggests that its writer was acquainted with the description in Plato quoted above. A young Jacobean nobleman who was present at many of these Masque-entertainments could scarcely help acquiring a considerable knowledge of classical mythology and legend.

69. *The daughters*, i.e. Lachesis, Clotho and Atropos.

70, 71. It is the influence of this celestial music that directs aright the revolutions of the universe.

71. *In measured motion.* Cf. the poem *Naturam non Pati Senium*, 33—38, especially lines 37, 38, which Cowper seems to have translated with the present passage before him:

> *Volvitur hinc lapsu Mundi rota prima diurno,*
> *Raptat et ambitos socia vertigine cælos.*

> "Hence the prime mover wheels itself about
> Continual, day by day, and with it bears
> In social measure the swift heavens round."

72. *Heavenly tune.* This notion of "the great sphere-music of stars and constellations" (Tennyson's *Parnassus*) was referred to Pythagoras. So Milton in his Latin exercise *De Spherarum Concentu* says: "*solus inter mortales concentum audisse fertur Pythagoras*," *Prose Works*, vol. VI. p. 155. In a note on *P. L.* v. 625—27, Todd quotes (without reference) a beautiful sentence from the Alexandrian Philo Judæus: ὁ δὲ οὐρανὸς ἀεὶ μελῳδεῖ, κατὰ τὰς κινήσεις τῶν ὄντων ἐν αὐτῷ τὴν πάμμουσον ἁρμονίαν ἀποτελῶν. Cf. Cicero's *Republic*, VI. 18.

The beauty of the idea explains the hold it has gained upon English poetry. Shakespeare refers to it several times, e.g. *Twelfth Night* III. 1. 121:

"I had rather hear you to solicit that
Than music from the spheres;"

Antony and Cleopatra v. 2. 83—84; and the *Merchant of Venice* v. 60. For Milton cf. the *Nativity Ode* 125—132; and the poem *At a Solemn Music*. In the latter Milton has done what he so often did—taken a theory of the ancients and penetrated it with Christian associations; cf. *Comus* 977 et seq. (with note), and *Lyc.* 180.

72, 73. Cf. *Merchant of Venice* v. 60—65; Lorenzo is speaking to Jessica and pointing to the starlit heaven:

"There's not the smallest orb, which thou behold'st,
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-ey'd cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it."

73. *Human mould*, i.e. one who bears the form of humanity. *Mould* is from Lat. *modulus*, through O.F. *modle*=Modern F. *moule*.

74—81. A magnificent compliment to the Countess: only the harmony of the spheres was worthy to celebrate her praise.

74. *Blaze*, i.e. proclaim; cf. *Romeo and Juliet* III. 3. 150—1:

"Till we can find a time
To blaze your marriage."

So in the Authorised Version, *Mark* i. 45. Cf. *emblaze* in *II. Henry VI.* IV. 10. 76. *Blaze*='fame' in *Lyc.* 74 (probably). The notion of the word is 'noising abroad' as by note of trumpet. A. S. *blǽsen*='to blow;' *cf. Germ. blasen*, in the same sense. Cognates are blare, blast and *blason*='a proclamation,' in *Hamlet* I. 5. 21.

76. *Fit*, i.e. 'such music' were fit.

78. *Go.* 'Walk,' a common meaning in Shakespeare: "ride more than thou goest," *Lear* I. 4. 134.

79. So in *Il Pen.* 151—154 the poet asks that music may breathe upon him:

"Sent by some spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius of the wood."

80. *Assay*, i.e. essay, attempt. See *Comus* 972, note.

81. *State.* 'Throne;' as before.

82. *Stem*, i.e. birth.

Song. This was sung by the Genius of the wood, perhaps to the accompaniment of a lute, Lawes being a notably skilled player of that instrument. The Masquers or Chorus advanced with him and did obeisance to the throned lady.

83. Looking back on this long piece of rhymed heroics we are struck by the almost unbroken series of complete rhymes. Usually Milton does not stint himself in the employment of imperfect rhyme. See *Introduction* to *Comus*.

84. *Enamelled*, i.e. so smooth as to look like enamel-work; cf. *Lyc.* 139, *P. L.* 149. A perfect specimen of the purely literary epithet. Milton was neither a close observer of nature like Tennyson, nor an enthusiast like Wordsworth; hence in painting any picture of nature he too often drew (as did Gray) upon the conventional imagery passed down from poet to poet. To this we owe the *soi-disant* 'poetic diction' against which Wordsworth's early work was a long protest. In Sidney's *Arcadia* the meadows were "enamelled with all sorts of eye-pleasing flowers;" and 'enamelled' have they been but too often since. Mr Ruskin has a curious criticism on the word in *Modern Painters*, III. 229. *Derivation: en*='on,' Lat. *in*. The second part *-amel-* is O. F. *esmail*, Mod. *émail*; cf. Ital. *smalto* and *smaltare*, 'to enamel' (given in Florio). Of German origin, the notion being 'something fused, melted' (Brachet); i.e. cognate with Germ. *schmelzen*='to smelt.' See Mayhew and Skeat, s. v. *Amellen*.

89. *Branching elm star-proof.* Most editors think that the pretty epithet "star-proof" was suggested by the *Faerie Queene* I. 1. 7, where Spenser speaks of a grove

"Not perceable with power of any starr."

A closer parallel, however, occurs in Peele's play, *David and Bethsabe:*

"*This* shade, sun-proof, is yet no proof for thee."

Matthew Arnold may have remembered one or the other when he wrote:

"The hills are clothed with pines sun-proof."
Church of Brou II.

Cowper echoes the present line in translating the first *Elegy* 49, 50, and the *Epitaphium Damonis* 69. Curiously enough Mark Pattison treats it as an instance of Milton's inaccuracy in describing nature: "the elm" (he says), "one of the thinnest foliaged trees of the forest, is inappropriately named star-proof," *Life of Milton* p. 25. Each can settle the question for himself: Milton, if wrong, is wrong with Tennyson: cf. *In Memoriam* XCV.:

"And gathering freshlier overhead,
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms."

Proof in these compounds retains the old sense of the noun, viz. 'test,' 'trial.' The "exception *proves* the rule" (*exceptio probat regulam*) because it puts the latter to the *test*. Cf. Cotgrave's explanation of O. F. *prover:* "to prove, try, essay, verifie." From Lat. *probare*. Low Latin has a substantive *proba;* whence German *probe*='rehearsal (i.e. trial) of a play.'

90. The refrain that Shelley uses so beautifully in *Prometheus Unbound* II.

96. Song. *Arcades* is so fragmentary that we are unable to follow the course of the Masque as actually performed. Perhaps after the preceding song a minuet or some other graceful dance (cf. *Comus* 962—65) took place; then the entertainment was brought to a close by the Masquers singing the final song as a madrigal. That, as we know from *Comus*, 495, was a form of musical composition in which Lawes excelled. The concluding couplet, first sung by the Masquers part-wise and then given out by the whole body, would emphasize the idea with which *Arcades* was produced; namely, homage to the Countess.

97. *Sandy Ladon.* A river in Arcadia which fell into the Alpheus. A poet alluding to the legend of Pan and the nymph Syrinx, or describing the pastoral life of Arcadia, was evidently bound to introduce the "Sandy Ladon." Cf. Browne, *Britannia's Pastorals* II. 4:

"*The silver Ladon* on his sandy shore
Heard my complaints." Carew Hazlitt's ed. II. p. 88;

and Giles Fletcher, *Christ's Victorie in Heaven*, 47:

"Like to the reede of Arcadie
Which Pan of Syrinx made, when she did flie
To Ladon's Sands." Grosart, p. 113.

Lilied occurs in Tennyson: "The streams through many a lilied row."—*Song* in the *Juvenilia*.

99. Lycæus, Erymanthus (100), Mænalus (102), and Cyllene were mountains in Arcadia; the three first being associated with Pan. Cyllene, the highest mountain in the Peloponnese, on the frontiers of Arcadia and Achaia, was the birthplace of Hermes and sacred to him: whence the epithet *Cyllenius* applied to Mercury, the Hermes of Roman mythology. Cf. Vergil's *quos ignis cælo Cyllenius erret in orbes*, where *Cyllenius ignis* = the planet Mercury. Cf. too the quotation from Carew's *Cælum Britannicum* in the note on *Comus*, the first stage direction. That the mountain was a favourite resort of the nymphs we know from Ben Jonson's *Penates*. Mercury appearing on the scene says: "The place whereon you are now advanced is the Arcadian hill Cyllene, the place where myself was begot and born....Here, for her month, the yearly delicate May keeps state....Hither the Dryads of the valley, and nymphs of the great river come every morning to taste of her favours."

100. *Erymanth.* On the frontiers of Achaia and Elis. There was also a river of the same name. Cf. Shelley's *Arethusa:*

"Then Alpheus bold,
On his glacier cold,
With his trident the mountains strook;
And opened a chasm
In the rocks; with the spasm
All Erymanthus shook."

The killing of the Erymanthian boar was one of the labours of Hercules. It may be noted that Milton very rarely shortens classical names; cf. however *Lycid* for *Lycidas* (151). In Chaucer and Spenser these abbreviations are common.

102. *Mænalus.* A favourite haunt of Pan. Vergil mentions Lycæus and Mænalus together:

Ipse nemus linquens patrium saltusque Lycæi
Pan, ovium custos, tua si tibi Mænala curæ.

G. i. 16, 17.

So Ben Jonson in the Masque of *Pan's Anniversary*, Hymn iv. 5. 15.

Mænalius became an epithet of the god. Cf. Ovid, *Fasti*, IV. 650, imitated by Milton in the fifth *Elegy* 125:

Per sata luxuriat fruticetaque Mænalius Pan.

A later reference to the legend is Shelley's

"Singing how down the vale of Mænalus
I pursued a maiden and clasped a reed."

Hymn of Pan.

106. *Syrinx.* Spenser in the *Shepheards Calender*, *April*, has:

"For shee is Syrinx daughter without spotte;"

upon which the writer of the *Glosse* (identified by some recent critics on very slender ground with Spenser himself) comments: "Syrinx is the name of a nymphe of Arcadie, whom when Pan being in love pursued, she, flying from him, of the Gods was turned into a reede. So that Pan catching at the Reedes, in stede of the Damosell, and puffing hard, (for he was almost out of wind,) with hys breath made the Reedes to pype; which hé seeing, tooke of them, and, in remembrance of his lost love, made him a pype thereof."

The river in which the nymph took refuge was the above-mentioned Ladon; see Vergil *Eclogue* II. 31, Ovid *Met.* I. 690 et seq. Σῦριγξ= 'a pipe.'

Were. The preterite subjunctive was then much more used than now. The following sentence from the *Areopagitica* has to us an antiquated ring: "He who *were* pleasantly dispos'd, could not well avoid to liken it to the exploit of that gallant man who thought to pound up the crows by shutting his Park-gate."

As an effective example of the beauty of the idiom, Earle, p. 543, quotes from Tennyson's *Œnone:*

"And, because right is right, to follow right,
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

107. *Her*, i.e. the new deity to whom the nymphs and shepherds should pay reverence; that is, the noble lady in whose honour *Arcades* was performed.

108, 109. The repetition of the refrain has point. After they have seen the "rural queen" the Masquers endorse what the Genius had said before they came into her presence: to look at her was to do reverence.

Lawes' Dedication. Henry Lawes, whose name must often be mentioned in connection with *Comus*, stood at the head of the English composers of his time. He was born in 1595. His father was a vicar-choral of Salisbury Cathedral, and probably the boy received his first training as a chorister in the Cathedral choir. Later on he studied under the well-known musician Giovanni Coperario, an Englishman who had Italianised his patronymic—John Cooper. In 1626 Lawes was made one of the Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal. Coperario had won distinction as a writer of music for Masques: that for the *Masque of Flowers*, 1614, was from his pen; and Lawes soon turned his attention the same way. In 1633, in conjunction with his brother William Lawes and Simon Ives of St Paul's choir, he produced the incidental music to Shirley's *Triumph of Peace;* and wrote single-handed the music of Carew's *Cœlum Britannicum. Comus* followed in 1634. Probably Lawes was responsible for the production of *Arcades*. He excelled as a song-writer. He did not belong to the line of our learned church-composers. He wrote little sacred music, little at any rate that has survived, though we possess the coronation anthem—"Zadock the Priest"—composed at the accession of Charles II. The older historians of English music—Burney and Hawkins—treat Lawes rather contemptuously. The former dismissed his music as "languid and insipid;" the latter complained that much of it was a compromise between recitative and air. Really Lawes' merit lay herein. A poet himself, he was content in setting the poetry of others to subordinate the music to the verse. Accent and rhythm were preserved, and the melody (very often a species of *aria parlante*) did not divert attention from the words. This is perhaps rare with musicians, and it accounted for Lawes' great popularity with contemporary poets—Cartwright, Waller, Carew, Herrick and others. Herrick and Milton were not alone in praising the favourite Court-composer. During the civil war he lost his post in the Chapel Royal, but was reinstated at the Restoration. He died in 1662. He was buried in the Cloisters of Westminster Abbey. A portrait of him hangs in the Music-school at Oxford. The elder brother was killed at the siege of Chester in 1645. The following sonnet by Milton was first printed in 1648 among several laudatory pieces of verse

prefixed to a volume of *Choice Psalmes, put into Musick for three Voices: composed by Henry and William Lawes, Brothers, and Servants to his Majestie:*

"HARRY, whose tuneful and well measured song
First taught our English music how to span
Words with just note and accent, not to scan
With Midas' ears, committing short and long,
Thy worth and skill exempts thee from the throng,
With praise enough for Envy to look wan;
To after age thou shalt be writ the man,
That with smooth air couldst humour best our tongue.
Thou honour'st Verse, and Verse must lend her wing
To honour thee, the priest of Phœbus' quire,
That tunest their happiest lines in hymn, or story.
Dante shall give Fame leave to set thee higher
Than his Casella, whom he woo'd to sing,
Met in the milder shades of Purgatory."

The first quatrain exactly expresses the quality for which Lawes' music was conspicuous; cf. *Comus* 86—88, and 494—96. The Cambridge draft of these lines is dated Feb. 9, 1646, new style. Evidently political differences had not interrupted the friendship of poet and composer. The best account of Lawes is given in the Article on him in Grove's *Dictionary of Music.*

Lord Brackley. The second Earl of Bridgewater, born in 1622; he succeeded his father in 1649, and died in 1686. This dedication was omitted (as we have said) from the edition of 1673; not unnaturally, since the Earl and the poet had taken opposite sides in the civil troubles. The former was arrested in 1651 on suspicion of being a royalist. Milton's polemical tract *Pro populo Anglicano defensio* appeared in that year, and the Earl of Bridgewater wrote on the title-page of his copy "Liber igne, author furca dignissimi" (Todd). For the rest he seems to have been a genial, learned man who patronised literature and "delighted much in his library."—See the Article in the *Dictionary of Biography.* Of the younger brother, Mr Thomas Egerton, who took part in the Masque, little is known. The sister, Lady Alice, married Richard Vaughan, Earl of Carberry.

The copy of a Letter. The writer of this letter, Sir Henry Wotton, was a man of note in diplomacy and literature. Born in 1568 at Bocton or Boughton Hall in Kent, he was educated at Winchester College, and

New College; migrating from the latter to Queen's. He left Oxford in 1589 and travelled for some years, though not so long as Walton says. Many of his letters to Lord Zouch are dated from Italy. In 1596 he became secretary to the Earl of Essex, and after the execution of the latter found it expedient to go abroad again. The reigning Duke of Florence, Ferdinand I., employed him upon a secret mission to James of Scotland, and, on the death of Elizabeth, Wotton was rewarded for his services with the post of English representative at Venice (*Winwood*, II. p. 221). He was also knighted, perhaps through the influence of his half-brother who had been raised to the peerage and was the Controller of the royal household. Sir Henry continued for many years, though with occasional breaks, in the diplomatic service; and in 1623, the Provostship of Eton falling vacant, had influence enough to secure the appointment. He was formally instituted Provost in 1625. Some years later, 1629, he took orders in the Church. Henceforth, till his death in 1639, his time was passed in scholarly leisure, enlivened by occasional visits to Oxford and much fishing in the company of Isaac Walton. Wotton's chief work was posthumously published in 1651, under a title which explains its miscellaneous contents: "*Reliquiæ Wottonianæ;* or, a Collection of Lives, Letters, Poems, with Characters of sundry Personages, and other incomparable Pieces of Language and Art: By the curious Pencil of the ever memorable Sir Henry Wotton, Knt., late Provost of Eaton College, 1651." The fourth edition of the *Reliquiæ*, 1685, contained the hitherto unpublished series of letters to Lord Zouch, perhaps the most valuable part of the volume. Wotton's life was told by his friend Isaac Walton; sundry errors therein are corrected by Mr Bullen in his edition of the *Lives* (*Bohn's Series*). Of his poetry (most people know the piece "You Meaner Beauties of the Night") the best edition is that by the late Archdeacon Hannah in the *Aldine Series—Poems of Raleigh, Wotton and other Courtly Poets.* It is prefaced by a very valuable introduction. The poems were also edited by Dyce for the Percy Society. Wotton's prose, as Professor Minto notes, has a certain Johnsonian dignity and balance. Perhaps the *Reliquiæ* does not now find many readers; but every one has heard of Sir Henry's definition of an ambassador as "an honest man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country." This was written in Latin (*Legatus est vir bonus peregrè missus ad mentiendum Reipublicæ causa*) in the album of a German friend at Augsburg. Like many epigrams it got its author into trouble. The enemies of James thought that ad mentiendum accurately summarised the characteristics of English diplomacy. See

Winwood, II. 407. The *équivoque* had more point then than now, because "to lie" was technically used of an ambassador's residence abroad (Hannah). Wotton seems to have had a turn for aphorism. His favourite motto—engraved on his tombstone—was *disputandi pruritus ecclesiarum scabies*. Sir Henry Wotton admirably represents the type of courtier, wit and scholar; a man, as Walton phrases it, "of a choice shape, tall of stature, and of a most persuasive behaviour."

From the College. Most of Wotton's letters written during his Provostship are prefaced or signed at the end with these words; and the value of his correspondence, more especially of his letters from Italy, is increased by the fact that—as befitted a diplomatist—he very rarely failed to give the full date and address. So lower down we can fix to the very month the time when he was "tabled" at Siena.

2. *The first taste.* Milton had retired to his father's house at Horton in 1632. Horton being so close to Eton it is curious that Sir Henry had not previously met his neighbour.

6. *Mr H.* Almost certainly the "ever-memorable" John Hales. A correspondent of *Notes and Queries*, 1st series, VI. p. 5, mentioned that he possessed a copy of Wotton's *Reliquiæ* in which a MS. note, dating from the last century, filled in the name; and Todd had previously suggested Hales who was for some years a Fellow of Eton and Canon of Windsor. Hales belonged to the Broad Church school of divines and anticipated Chillingworth in advocating tolerance. He died in 1656, in his 73rd year. Some of his works were published in 1659, under the title *Golden Remains*. His learning won for him the epithet "ever-memorable." For allusions to him in the *Reliquiæ*, see pp. 369, 475.

A less probable theory identifies "Mr H." with the Polish *immigré* Samuel Hartlib, to whom Milton addressed the *Tractate of Education*.

16. *Doric*, i.e. Theocritean. Cp. *Lyc.* 189:

"With eager thought warbling his Doric lay."

Wotton shows his critical faculty in singling out the lyric portions of *Comus* for special commendation.

21. i.e. he has known the poem, but not the name of its author.

23. *Mr R.* This "common friend"—the vulgarism 'mutual friend' is modern—was probably John Rouse of Oriel College, sometime (1620—1652) Bodley's Librarian. Milton had been incorporated M.A. at Oxford *in 1635*, according to the common practice, and on one *of his visits to the* University must have found his way to the Bodleian;

or he may have met Rouse in some Oxford Common Room. Some years later (1647) the poet addressed Rouse in an elaborate Latin ode, celebrating the "*sedes beatas*" of the Library

> *Quo neque lingua procax vulgi penetrabit, atque longe*
> *Turba legentum prava facesset.*

It has been suggested—not without reason—that the reference may be to Robert Randolph of Christ Church, brother of the poet; see next note. But the other explanation seems preferable. If Robert Randolph had been the sender of the poems Sir Henry Wotton was too courtly a man to have sneered at them.

in the very close. Sir Henry Wotton means that his Oxford friend had inserted a copy of Lawes' edition of *Comus* at the end of a volume of poems by "the late R." I think Oldys was the first to identify the latter with Thomas Randolph, the Cambridge poet. The British Museum possesses an interleaved copy of Langbaine's *Dramatick Poets*, 1691, which was once in the library of Oldys. It bears his initials on the title-page—"W. O. 1727"—and is full of very valuable and little used notes from the pen of that busy "thirsty fly" of literature. Oldys quotes Sir Henry's words with the remark—"these are certainly meant for Randolph's poems"; and over against Langbaine's account of *Comus* he writes: "I think the Masque was printed soon after it was first acted, and was then often bound up with the first edition of Randolph's poems in 4°." Langbaine, probably by a misprint, gave 1687 as the date of Lawes' edition, and Oldys evidently did not know much about the early imprints of *Comus*. His statement that the quarto of 1637 was frequently bound together with the 1638 edition of Randolph is unsupported by any evidence. No extant copy of the works of the latter contains *Comus*. The identification however of "the late R." with Randolph is something favoured by the dates. Randolph died, according to Wood's account in the *Athenæ*, in 1634; an edition of his poems in quarto form was issued at Oxford by his brother in 1638. Still we do not know whether this edition appeared so early in the year as April, and it seems curious that Sir Henry should speak of having received his present "some good while." If—as the editors think—the allusion be to this edition of Randolph, then the volume with its inserted copy of *Comus* could not have been very long in Sir Henry's hands. Also the suggestion that the accessory had to help out the principal was much out of place if directed against Randolph, as Oldys himself admitted.

Born in 1605 and educated at Westminster and Trinity College, Cambridge, of which he became a fellow, Randolph was an exceedingly clever and gifted writer, one of the ablest of the intellectual 'sons' of Ben Jonson. Besides a number of pieces of by no means mediocre verse he produced some excellent dramatic work, notably a pastoral, *Amyntas;* an obvious and successful imitation of Ben Jonson in *The Jealous Lovers;* and a series of scenes thrown into dialogue-form, entitled *The Muses' Looking-Glass.* If Sir Henry Wotton could not read the last on the list *con la bocca dolce* he must have been unduly fastidious.

Randolph's father, curiously enough, was steward of the Lord Zouch to whom many of the letters in the *Reliquiæ* are addressed, and through this connection Sir Henry may have met the Trinity fellow. Milton, we may add, paid Randolph the compliment of borrowing a line from his early dramatic sketch *Aristippus.* *L' All.* 24 was clearly inspired by the couplet

> "A bowl of wine is wondrous good cheer,
> To make one blithe, buxom and debonair."

Mr Carew Hazlitt edited a reprint (1875) of Randolph's *Works* from which much information is obtainable.

26. *con la bocca dolce*, i.e. with a pleasant taste on the palate. Cf. the French *bonne bouche.* Cowley, who uses a good many Gallicisms, writes at the end of his essay on *Liberty:* "I shall conclude this tedious discourse with a prayer of mine in a copy of Latin verses...and (*pour faire bonne bouche*) with some other verses upon the same subject." *Bouche* and *bocca* are from Lat. *bucca.*

29. *Blanch*, i.e. shrink from. Cf. Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, II. 69: "In annotacions...it is ouer vsual to blaunche the obscure places, and discoarse upon the playne;" and Evelyn, *Memoirs*, III. 2. 40: "whether am I to blanche this particular?" (*New English Dictionary*, s. v.). If we used the verb at all we should treat it as intransitive, inserting *from.* For the etymology see note on *unblenched*, l. 430, and *blank*, 452.

Paris. Milton arrived there in April or May of this year (1638). He seems to have stayed some little time, not reaching Florence till August.

30. *Mr M. B.* Identified with Michael Branthwaite. Sir Henry Wotton *mentions him* in the *Reliquiæ* as "heretofore his Majesties Agent *in Venice, a gentleman* of approved confidence and sincerity," p. 546.

Cf. also p. 549 where Branthwaite is the bearer of a letter from Sir Henry Wotton to the Duke of Buckingham. This was in 1626. Afterwards Branthwaite became diplomatic agent at Paris. Probably he is the "Mr B." referred to in a later letter from which we quote below. The Michael Branthwaite mentioned by Wood in the *Athenæ* is a different man. Perhaps Sir Henry's friend was a connection of the well-known Cambridge scholar, William Branthwaite, who was entered of Clare Hall in 1578, served on one of the Cambridge committees appointed by James for the drawing up of the Authorised Version, and died during his Vice-Chancellorship in 1620.

p. 11, 1. *Lord S.*, i.e. Lord Scudamore, son of the English ambassador at Paris. It was to the latter (a friend of Laud, appointed to the embassy in 1635) that Milton owed his introduction to Grotius, the only detail of his residence in the French capital which we know. Milton may have been recommended to Viscount Scudamore by the Egerton family. In any case he had occasion to express gratitude for the courtesy received from the ambassador. See the *Defensio Secunda* (translated by Archdeacon Wrangham, 1816), our chief source of information upon the poet's travels.

7. *Marseilles...to Genoa.* The route that Addison took; see the beginning of his *Travels*. People going to Italy by sea would naturally make for the great Mediterranean port. Thus Howell in the *Instructions for Forreine Travell* recommends travellers to see France first, then the Spanish peninsula, and afterwards make their way to Barcelona to "take the Gallies for *Italy*, for there are divers Fleets passe in the yeare thence with treasure, and crosse the Mediterranean to Genoa," edn. 1650, p. 53. Sir Henry Wotton implies that Milton will not care to remain at Genoa. Howell writes to like effect: "Having put foot ashoare in *Genoa* I will not wish him (i.e. the traveller) to stay long there...let him hasten to *Toscany*, to Siena, where the prime *Italian* dialect is spoken," pp. 53, 54. As a matter of fact Milton did not follow Sir Henry's advice with regard to the route. Travelling south he entered Italy by way of Nice and thence coasted to Genoa. At Florence he spent two months, August and September. It was a favourite resting-place with English voyagers. Howell speaks of it with enthusiasm, *Letters*, p. 63, edn. 1753.

8. *Gravesend barge.* The reference may be explained by a passage from Hasted's *History of Kent*, vol. I. p. 450: "King Richard II. granted to the *Abbat* and *Convent* of St Mary Graces, that the inhabitants of *Gravesend* and *Milton* should have the sole privilege of

carrying passengers by water from hence to *London*, on condition that they should provide boats for that purpose, and carry all passengers either at *2d.* per head with their bundle, or let the hire of the whole boat at *4s.* This charter was confirmed several times afterwards by succeeding kings, and under proper regulation by the legislature they still (1778) enjoy the privilege." Information to the same effect is given in the *Remembrancia of the City of London*, pp. 511, 512.

12. *At Siena.* This was in the autumn of 1592. Cf. the following extracts from Sir Henry's correspondence. "I am here," he writes to Lord Zouch from Siena, Oct. 25, 1592, "by the means of certain Persons (to whom I was recommended) gotten into the House of Scipione Alberti, an ancient Courtier of the Popes, and a Gentleman of this Town, at whose Table I live"—and he adds "but dearly." So again from Geneva in the following summer, August 22: "Before I conclude this I must advertise your Honour, that I have certain Papers for you, and amongst the rest, the manner of Service in the Courts of Rome, with Points appertinent, described at my request by Scipione Alberti, my Host in Sienna, and sometime Major *duomo* of the Duke of *Paliano*. I was the more earnest with him, remembering your Honour to have wish'd for such a thing.... I have likewise written by the same man the Death of the Dutchess of *Paliano* in the bloody times of *Paulus* the Fourth." *Reliquiæ*, ed. 4, 1685, pp. 699 and 711. The reference to the Duke of Pagliano I cannot explain. "Paulus the Fourth" is meant for Paul IV.—previously Cardinal Caraffa—who was Pope from 1555 to 1559. He belonged to the line of *zelanti* occupants of the Papal throne.

13. Evidently the story that follows was a favourite with Sir Henry; we have another version of it in the *Reliquiæ*. The advice of the Provost had been asked by some travellers, and he replied by mentioning that "Catholick Rule which was given me long since by an old Roman Courtier, with whom I tabled in Siena, and whose Counsels I begged for the Government of myself at my departure from him towards the foresaid Court, where he had been so well versed. *Sinor Arrigo* (says he), there is one short remembrance will carry you safe through the whole World. I was glad to hear such a preservative contracted into so little room, and so besought him to honour me with it. Nothing but this (saith he) Gli Pensiere stretti, ed il Viso sciolto: that is, as I use to translate it, *Your Thoughts close* and *your Countenance loose. This* was that Moral Antidote which I imparted to Mr *B. and his Fellow*-Travellers when they were last with me."

There was a certain irony in Sir Henry Wotton's assuming the part of judicious adviser; as Archdeacon Hannah remarks, he had not proved himself a particularly cautious ambassador (*Courtly Poets*, p. xv.). Long experience, however, of Italian life had doubtless impressed upon him one fact—that a Protestant, more especially so aggressively outspoken a Protestant as was Milton—could not be too careful how he bore himself in the land of the Inquisition. The fierce times of persecution were over—the Catholic reaction had somewhat spent itself in Italy; but a stern unbending Puritan might still have very easily got into trouble. And it is strange that Milton did not; for he paid no attention to the maxim of *pensieri stretti*, but freely offended the English Jesuits and others at Rome by ill-timed expression of his religious beliefs. Mark Pattison, pp. 33—38.

The performance. This took place, Michaelmas night, 1634, in the great Hall of Ludlow Castle, afterwards, says Professor Masson, called 'Comus Hall.' At the end of the room a stage was erected, concealed from the audience by a curtain or screen (see note at line 658), until the piece began. The Earl and Countess of Bridgewater, we may presume, occupied the Throne of State (see *Arcades*, note on the first stage-direction); the audience filling the rest of the hall. When everything was ready the scene, representing a wood, was disclosed.

THE PERSONS. The Masque contains six characters. We know how four of the parts were filled. Lawes played the part of the Attendant Spirit, afterwards Thyrsis; cf. his dedicatory letter. At the end of his edition he mentions the names of the Lady Alice Egerton and her brothers. This leaves two parts unaccounted for—Comus and Sabrina. For the latter one of the other Ladies Egerton may have appeared; and the Comus, no doubt, was some friend of the Bridgewater family.

Presented, i.e. represented the characters. Cf. *Tempest*, IV. 167, "when I presented Ceres."

The first scene. The stage-directions throughout *Comus* are extremely simple. Usually Masque-writers—especially Ben Jonson, Campion, and Shirley—insert very full details as to the arrangement of the scenes, the dresses of the *dramatis personæ*, the music, and so forth.

Discovers, i.e. reveals. *Discover*, now almost limited to the sense *'find out,'* is a word of very various use in Shakespeare, 'lay open to view' and *'show'* being its commonest meanings. We find the latter

at least as late as Addison; cf. the *Character of Will Wimble:* "I was very much pleased to observe...the secret joy which his guest discovered at sight of the good old knight."

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT *descends.* Probably the scenery in the background represented a hill; down this the Spirit comes, and at the actual representation of *Comus* his arrival was heralded by music. This we know from the *Bridgewater MS.* (the stage-copy in accordance with which the piece was performed), where the attendant Genius enters with a song. The song in question consisted of the lines which properly stood in the epilogue of *Comus;* viz. lines 976—1011. There they form part of the speech of the Spirit when he leaves the scene. Lawes detached the epiloguising passage from its context and fitted it in at the opening as a speech of arrival. To do this only one change was necessary: for "*to* the heavens now I fly" the *Bridgewater MS.* reads "*from* the heavens." The alteration involved some tautology: having explained in the song that he came from heaven it was superfluous to add that his mansion lay before the threshold of love's palace. Also, spoken at the close of the Masque the verses have a point which they here lose; they were meant to emphasize the moral of *Comus.* See note on lines 1003—1011. The change illustrates the fact which we shall have occasion to note more than once—viz. that many of the details of the performance of *Comus* were determined by the musician rather than the poet. In this particular instance I believe that Lawes was influenced by the example of Carew's *Cœlum Britannicum,* for which in the previous year he had written the incidental music. This famous Masque began with a long speech in blank verse by the god Mercury:

> "From the high Senate of the gods, to you
> . . . . . .
> Come I, Cyllenius, love's Ambassadour."

But the entry of the deity is marked by "loud musicke;" then comes the address. The commencement, therefore, of *Comus* as arranged by Lawes was exactly similar to that of the *Cœlum Britannicum.* See Hazlitt's *Carew,* Roxburghe Library, p. 199.

1. Note that this introductory speech serves as a prologue of the Euripidean type. It explains the purport of the piece before any action takes place. *S. A.* begins more directly with the speech of Samson. In the *third draft of the* scheme of *P. L.*, which was to be treated in *dramatic form, Milton* sketched the outlines of a prologue similar to the

present: "Moses προλογίζει, recounting how he assumed his true body; that it corrupts not" etc. Later on came the drama proper, divided into the orthodox five acts. The paper referred to is among the Milton MSS. in the library of Trinity College; see *Introduction*, p. xxii.

3. *Aerial spirits.* Burton has the phrase in a different sense; his "aerial spirits" are "such as keep quarter most part in the air, cause many tempests, thunder and lightnings, tear Oaks, fire Steeples, Houses, strike men and beasts," *Anatomy of Melancholy*, p. 28, ed. of 1676.

Insphered. Cf. *Il Pen.* 88—91:

> "Unsphere
> The spirit of Plato, to unfold
> What worlds or what vast regions hold
> The immortal mind;"

i.e. call down the soul of Plato from the sphere it inhabits. It must be remembered that *sphere* in Milton is always used more or less in reference to the Ptolemaic system; cf. the note on *Arcades*, 64. Shakespeare has *sphered* in two senses, (i) 'round as a sphere,' (ii) 'placed in a sphere.' Cf. *Troilus*, I. 3. 90 "In noble eminence enthron'd and spher'd" (said of the sun).

4. *Serene.* Apparently the stress falls on the first syllable—*Sérene.* See note on l. 273.

In the Cambridge MS. after line 4 follow fourteen verses which Milton rejected, though some of the expressions used in them were subsequently (cf. 393—95) worked into the poem. The lines are:

> "Amidst the Hesperian gardens, on whose banks,
> Bedewed with nectar and celestial songs,
> Eternal roses grow, and hyacinths,
> And fruits of golden rind, on whose fair tree
> The scaly-harnessed dragon ever keeps
> His unenchanted eye. Around the verge
> And sacred limits of this blissful Isle
> The jealous Ocean, that old river, winds
> His far-extended arms, till with steep fall
> Half his waste flood the wild Atlantic fills,
> And half the slow unfathomed Stygian pool.
> But soft! I was not sent to court your wonder
> With distant worlds and strange removed climes.
> *Yet thence* I come, and oft from thence behold"—

What the Spirit 'beholds' is "the smoke and stir of this dim narrow

spot." When Milton crossed the whole passage out he inserted *above* at the beginning of line 5, removed *narrow*, and so gave us the present text.

5. Cf. *P. L.* II. 868 where he speaks of "the gods who live at ease;" adapting Homer's θεοὶ ῥεῖα ζώοντες, *Iliad* VI. 138.

7. *Pestered.* 'Shackled,' 'kept prisoners in.' It has been connected with *pestis;* also with Italian *pesta*='a crowd.' But *pester* is short for *impester;* and *impester*=O. F. *empestrer*, modern F. *empêtrer*. Cotgrave explains *empestrer* by "to pester, entangle, incumber." *Empestrer* comes from Lat. *im* (or *in*) and *pastorium*, a Low Latin word='clog for a horse at pasture.' Cf. Du Cange: "*Pastorium idem videtur* Pastorium *quod Italis* Pastoia *etiam nunc dicitur, Pedica nempe seu compedes quibus equi, ne aberrent in pascuis, impediuntur: nostris* Entraves." Brachet notes that *pastorium* often occurs with this sense in old laws; e.g. "*si quis pastorium de caballo alieno tulerit....*" The opposite of *empêtrer* is *depêtrer*, i.e. *depestrer*='to unloose the horse;' whence the general meaning 'disencumber.' *Pester* now='annoy;' but we sometimes find it used with reference to the original sense. Thus in North's *Plutarch*, in the description of Cleopatra's barge, it is said that "the wharf's side (was) pestered with innumerable multitudes of people"—Skeat's ed. p. 175. The word has special appropriateness in our text because *pinfold* which follows carries out the idea of an animal shackled and confined.

Pinfold. Skeat says: "Pinfold, for *pind-fold;* from A. S. *pyndan*, to pen up" (*Principles of Etymology*, p. 427). "If I had thee in Lipsbury pinfold, I would make thee care for me," *Lear* II. 2. 9. The more usual word *pound* ('an enclosure for strayed cattle') is akin to *pinfold.*

10. *Mortal change*, i.e. change from mortality; cf. "quick immortal change"='change which quickly made her immortal,' l. 841.

11. Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra* I. 3. 28:

"Though you in swearing shake the throned gods."

Comus contains not a few of the commonplaces that are handed on from poet to poet. We may trace in the language of these opening lines the influence of the *Revelation* iv. Cowper in translating the Latin poem *Mansus*, 95, 96, echoed our text:

"Born to those seats, to which the blest aspire."

13. *Golden key.* Cf. the reference to St Peter in *Lyc.* 110, 111:

"*Two massy* keys he bore of metals twain,
The golden opes, the iron shuts amain."

In each case Milton is referring to the words of Christ in *Matthew*, xvi. 19, "and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Commenting on the passage in *Lyc.*, Masson remarks; "the number of the keys given to St Peter is not mentioned in Scripture, but ecclesiastical and poetical tradition had made them two, and otherwise distinguished them"—III. p. 453. We find the same allusion in Ben Jonson, *The Barriers*. He is describing the figure of Truth:

> "Her right hand holds a sun with burning rays,
> Her left a curious bunch of golden keys
> With which heaven's gate she locketh and displays."

Gray in the *Progress of Poesy*, and Tennyson in *In Memoriam*, LXIV., infuse fresh associations into the phrase.

16. *Ambrosial.* The epithet had two main senses: (i) 'belonging to heaven,' 'worthy of the gods:' hence applied to their food, raiment (as here), and so forth; (ii) 'divinely fragrant,' i.e. perfumed as with ambrosia, balmy. Milton has the word repeatedly; Tennyson, perhaps even more often. Der. ἄμβροτος = 'immortal.' *Ambrosia* is one of the many Greek words adopted in their original or latinised forms; cf. Earle's list, *Philology of the English Tongue*, p. 352.

17. *Sin-worn*, i.e. worn out by sin:

> "plagued
> And worn with famine." *P. L.* X. 572, 3.

But the sense might be 'worn amid sin.' For *weeds* = 'dress,' see line 189.

18. *Sway*, 'rule,' a favourite word with Milton both as noun and verb, is of Scandinavian origin. It properly means 'to bend;' hence the idea of enforcing submission.

20. For the division of empire cf. *Iliad* XV. 190 et seq.; Poseidon's words to Iris: "Three brethren are we, and sons of Kronos, whom Rhea bare, Zeus and myself, and Hades is the third, the ruler of the folk in the under world. And in three lots are all things divided, and each drew a domain of his own, and to me fell the hoary sea, to be my habitation for ever, when we shook the lots: and Hades drew the murky darkness, and Zeus the wide heaven, in clear air and clouds, but the earth and the high Olympus are yet common to all—" *The Iliad, Done into English Prose* by Lang, Leaf and Myers.

'Twixt high... Probably the words are qualified by *lot; lot having the sense* 'agreement:' i.e. Neptune took the sea for his share *through a compact* between Zeus and Hades. 'Twixt, however, might

be used of place, i.e. Neptune's dominion lay between Heaven above and Hades below. In the latter case a comma after *lot* is necessary; and the word would have its ordinary meaning. Cf. *Arcades* 44.

Nether Jove. Hades, Ζεὺς καταχθόνιος *Iliad* IX. 457.

23. *Unadornèd*, i.e. which would be unadorned but for the island.

25. i.e. each island is committed to a particular deity. In modern English *several* is much more often an indefinite pronoun='a few' than, as here and frequently in Shakespeare, an adjective. Derived from O. F. *several*, Low Lat. *separabile*='a thing apart.' For a medial *p* in Latin=*b* in popular Lat.=*v* in French, see note on *Sovran*, l. 41.

27. It is impossible not to compare Shakespeare's patriotic panegyric on

"this sceptered isle...

. . . . . .

This fortress built by nature for herself"—

Richard II. II. I. 40—44.

Spenser in the dedicatory stanzas of the *Faerie Queene* (IV) salutes Elizabeth as "Great Ladie of the greatest Isle."

28. *Main.* 'Sea;' but it could also mean 'mainland,' as in *Lear*, III. I. 6, "Or swell the curled waters 'bove the main." *Main*= Icelandic *megin*, i.e. *megin-sjör*, 'mighty sea.' *Megin*, frequent in compounds, is from Aryan base *magh*, 'to be great,' whence μέγας, *magnus* etc. See Skeat, *Dict.* s.v. *may*, or better, his note on *Two Noble Kinsmen*, p. 119.

29. *Quarters*, i.e. assigns. *Blue-haired.* Masson finds the epithet curious; but from the stage-directions in other Masques it may be inferred that convention associated hair of this hue with the deities of the sea. It was intended, of course, to symbolise the colour of the waves. Cf. the quotation from Ben Jonson's *Masque of Blackness* in the note on line 873. Again in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Masque of the Inner Temple and Grays Inn* (1612) four Naiads appear on the stage, "with blueish tresses on their heads, garlands of waterlilies"—Moxon's ed., II. 687. Poetic tradition counts for a great deal in the Masque. Cowper has a reminiscence of the present line in his translation of a couplet in the poem *Mansus*, 32, 33. Milton's Latin runs:

Qua Thamesis late puris argenteus undis
Oceani glaucos perfundit gurgite crines;

which Cowper renders:

"Where Thames with his unsullied waves
The tresses of the blue-haired Ocean laves."

30. *This tract.* Wales.

31. *Noble Peer*, i.e. the Earl of Bridgewater, who was present. Milton contrives in the course of *Comus* to pay a compliment to all those who were mainly concerned in the performance of the Masque; cf. lines 86—88, 244—48, 297—301, 496—97.

It was no unusual thing for the Elizabethan dramatists to insert pieces of flattery to the queen when they knew that she would be present at the representation of a play.

Micel='great' in old English; it is the original form of *much; micel, michel, muchel, much* being the stages of transition; allied to Gk μέγας, μεγ-ά-λο. Cf. note on *main*, l. 28.

32. *with tempered awe*, i.e. with a due mixture of firmness and conciliation. From Rymer it would appear that the new Lord President received very particular instructions as to the official course which he should pursue.

33. *nation*, i.e. the Welsh. Milton knew that there would be Welshmen present among his audience. One of Ben Jonson's *Entertainments* fulfils the promise of its title—*For the Honour of Wales*—and pays every possible compliment to the "old and haughty nation, proud in arms."

36. *New-intrusted.* Really the Earl's appointment dated, as we have seen, from the summer of 1631.

37. *Perplexed*, i.e. entangled. Scan *pérplexed* and compare l. 273 note.

38. *Horror.* Cf. *horrid=horridus* in 429. It is the kind of word which Milton, with his classical sympathy, takes straight from Vergil.

39. *Forlorn.* Perhaps in its etymological sense 'lost;' see l. 236, note.

41. Cf. *Arcades*, 44, 45, where the Genius of the Wood proclaims himself the minister of Jove.

Sovran. This form is invariable in *P. L.*; so *sovranty*, *P. L.* II. 446, XII. 35. In *P. R.* I. 84 the early editions have *sov'raign*, which is closer to the modern form. *Sovereign* is derived from *souverain*, O. F. *soverain. Souverain* came from *superanum* [a medial *p* in classical Latin became *b* in the popular Latin spoken in Gaul after its conquest by Cæsar,—cf. *sabonem* for *saponem;* and *b* in turn dropped to *v* in French—e.g. *avoir* from *habere*, *devoir* from *debere*]. Trench *pointed out* that in English "all the words of dignity, state, honour, *and preeminence*, with one remarkable exception (i.e. *King*), descend

to us" from the Normans. Amongst these importations was *sovereign*. *Sovran* represents, not so much the French *souverain*, as the Italian *sovrano*.

43. *You*. Milton wrote *ye*. In old English *ye* was used as a nominative, *you* as a dat. or accus. The English Bible (1611) observes this rule. But in Shakespeare we find *you* for nom. and *ye* for accus.

Johnson condemned this address to the audience; "a mode of communication so contrary to the nature of dramatic representation, that no precedents can support it." But throughout his criticism of *Comus* (and the *Life* of Milton represents Johnson at his worst; see *Introduction* and note on line 859) he made the cardinal mistake of judging the piece by the standard of dramas proper. *Comus* is a Masque, and should be treated as such; we must compare it, not with the plays of Shakespeare, but with the *Entertainments* of Ben Jonson; and it will not suffer by the comparison.

44. Horace's

carmina non prius
audita musarum sacerdos
....*canto*—*Odes*, III. 1. 2—4.

We have a similar claim to originality at the beginning of *P. L.* I. 13—16:

"I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventrous song,
.....while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme."

How much, or how little, *Comus* owed to previous works, we have already seen. For the apparent egotism of the poet cf. note on l. 515.

45. The "old" bards might be the "fine fablers and lowd lyers" of whom we read in the *Glosse* to the *Shepheards Cal.*, *April*, "such as were the Authors of King Arthure the Great, and such like, who tell many an unlawfull leasing." Milton himself alludes more than once to some of the great cycles of mediæval prose and poetic romance; cf. *P. L.* I. 579—587; *P. R.* II. 358—61.

Hall or bower. Perhaps a traditional phrase; cf. Spenser's *Astrophel*, 27, 28:

"And he himselfe seemed made for meriment,
Merily masking both in bowre and hall;"

the subject of the verses being Sir Philip Sidney.

"Hall"=the room of State in which the whole household assembled; "bower"=the ladies' private room.

48. The allusion is to the story of Bacchus being seized on his way from Icaria to Naxos. "He hired a ship which belonged to Tyrrhenian pirates; but the men, instead of landing at Naxos, steered towards Asia, to sell him there as a slave. Thereupon the god changed the mast and oars into serpents, and himself into a lion; ivy grew round the vessel, and the sound of flutes was heard on every side; the sailors were seized with madness, leaped into the sea, and were metamorphosed into dolphins."—Smith's *Classical Dict.* Ovid relates the legend in the third book of the *Metamorphoses*, 660 et seq.

After the... A cumbrous Latinism=*post mutatos nautas.* Cf. *P. L.* v. 247—8:

"Nor delayed
The winged Saint after his charge received;"

and same bk. 332. Abbott, *Shakespearian Gram.* par. 418, quotes a similar case from *All's Well*, II. 1. 6:

"It is our hope, sir,
After well enter'd soldiers, to return;"

i.e. after we have been entered or initiated as soldiers. The participle is made to do the duty of a substantive followed by a genitive case, as in *post conditam urbem* and such like phrases; but the idiom seems alien to the genius of our language and is obsolete.

50. *Circe's island*, viz. the island of Aea; cf. *Odyssey*, X. 133—136:

ἔνθεν δὲ προτέρω πλέομεν ἀκαχήμενοι ἦτορ,
Αἰαίην δ' ἐς νῆσον ἀφικόμεθ'· ἔνθα δ' ἔναιε
Κίρκη.

The Romans placed Circe's home on the promontory of Circeii (Monte Circello), in Italy; cf. *Æneid*, III. 385:

et salis Ausonii lustrandum navibus æquor
Infernique lacus Ææaque insula Circes.

Island. Milton wrote the correct form *iland.* The *s* in the modern form *island* was due to confusion with French *isle*, Lat. *insula.* *I-land*='waterland;' the first half of the word, *i*, being traceable to *the root which* gives us A.S. *ig*='stream' (cf. Angles-*ey*), German *aue*='meadow near water,' and, on the side of the classical languages, Lat. *aqua.* Raphe Robynson in his translation of the Utopia always (I.

believe) writes *ilande;* e.g. on page 87 of the Pitt Press ed.: "they had rather suffer their forreyne townes to decaye and peryshe, then any cytie of theire owne ilande to be diminished." It should be added that *isle* is a correct spelling: *isle* does come from O. F. *isle=île.*

Who knows not Circe?

This rhetorical repetition of a name or word in the form of a question is an artifice frequently used by Spenser: cf. *Shepheards Calender, August:*

"A doolefull verse
Of Rosalend (who knows not Rosalend?)
That Colin made;"

again, the same poem, *Januarie:*

"I love thilke lasse, (Alas! why do I love?)
And am forlorne, (Alas! why am I lorne?)."

The *Glosse* to the latter remarks: "A prety epanorthosis in these two Verses"—*Globe ed.* pp. 447, 471. We find the trick employed by other writers; e.g. by the unknown author of *Brittain's Ida*, I. 1:

"In Ida vale (who knows not Ida Vale?)."

It is one of the affectations of pastoral idiom in Matthew Arnold's *Thyrsis* (12).

51. Cf. The *Inner Temple Masque,*

"Mighty Circe (daughter to the Sun)"—

Hazlitt's edition of *Browne*, II. p. 244. Her mother was Perse, one of the Oceanides, *Odyssey*, X. 136. Milton in the sixth *Elegy*, 73, mentions *monstrificam Perseïæ Phœbados aulam.*

52, 53. Milton speaks as though physical uprightness symbolised moral. So in the same literal way he describes Mammon in *P. L.* I. 679, 680 as

"the least erected spirit that fell
From Heaven."

The poet was himself a very graceful man; Aubrey tells us, "his harmonical and ingenious soul dwelt in a beautiful and well proportioned body."

55. The representations of Bacchus in art differ widely; but the youthful god described here is a recognised type. It was probably the traditional association of ivy with the wine-god that led to the custom of affixing an ivy-bush at the doors of taverns; whence again the

proverb "good wine needs no bush," which is traceable at least as far back as Shakespeare, *As You Like It, Epilogue*, 4. 6.

56, 57. In *L'Al.* 14—24 Milton speculates as to the parentage of Mirth = Euphrosyne. He offers two theories, one being that she is the child of Bacchus and Venus. Comus would in that case be her half-brother: she, Pleasure on its innocent side: he, on its sensual. Comus however must typify not sensuality alone, but also illicit powers. Hence he inherits the qualities of his mother, and excels her. If she was πολυφάρμακος (*Odyssey* x. 276) he must be—and is—still mightier. For this union of Bacchus and Circe the poet had no authority in the classics.

59. *Frolic.* G. *fröhlich*, 'gay.'

60. i.e. France and Spain. Cf. *P. L.* i. 521:

> "Fled over Adria to the Hesperian fields,
> And o'er the Celtic roamed the utmost Isles."

61. *Ominous.* Not so much 'threatening,' as 'full of portents or magical appearances.' The wood is peopled with "calling shapes and beckoning shadows dire," l. 207. *Ominous* is a dissyllable.

64. *Traveller.* Printed *travailer* in the early editions, and I am not quite sure that it is right to reject the form, as does Masson. *Travel* and *travail* are identical. Their history is as follows: A Low Latin verb *travare* (what Skeat calls a "theoretical form" i.e. a word which we may be sure existed, though no instance of its actual occurrence can be quoted) meant 'to fetter,' 'clog;' derived from *trabs*, because the clog took the form of a beam; extant in French *entraver* = 'to shackle.' Cf. also the Chaucerian word *trave* = "a frame in which travellers confine unruly horses" (*Mayhew and Skeat* s.v.), and Ital. *travàglio* with same sense. From the idea of 'fettering' came that of 'doing a thing with difficulty;' i.e. 'toiling,' 'labouring.' Hence French *travail;* also English *travail*, of a woman in childbirth. Then came the notion of 'journeying,' because to journey in olden times was a matter of difficulty or *travail*. It need scarcely be added that in modern English the distinction in meaning is represented by difference in spelling: *travel* = 'make a journey:' *travail* = 'toil.' But in the XVIth century, and, as we see from the present line, in early XVIIth century English the distinction was not recognised: people often wrote *travailer* where we should *say traveller,* and conversely *travel* where they meant 'work hard.' Thus in the *Life of Sir Thomas More* by his son-in-law, William Roper (died 1577), we read that Henry VIII commissioned Wolsey to procure for

him the services of More "and the Cardinall accordinge to the King's request earnestlie *travelled* with him" (i.e. entreated More). On the other hand cf. the following from Robynson's translation of the *Utopia:* "But after the departynge of mayster Vespuce, when he had *travailed* thorough and aboute many countreyes...he arrived in Taprobane"—Pitt Press ed. of the *Utopia*, pp. VIII. 20. The quartos and early editions of Shakespeare give quite indiscriminately *travail* and *travel* (vb. and n.); *travailer, travailor, traveiler, travellour* and the modern *traveller*. The original base of all these words—viz. *trabs*, or rather *trabem*—is clearly seen in the Spanish *trabayo* = 'toil,' *trabar* = 'to clog,' and Low Lat. *trabaculum*.

65. *Orient.* In a note on *Midsummer N. D.* IV. l. 59 Mr Aldis Wright points out that *orient* was first applied to pearls and other gems as coming from the Orient or east; afterwards, because the objects which it ordinarily described were bright, *orient* was used of anything brilliant and lustrous. Cf. for example, *P. L.* l. 545—6:

> "Ten thousand banners rise into the air,
> With orient colours waving."

The tears of the goddess in *Venus and Adonis*, 981 are "orient" drops.

66. *Drouth.* Akin to *dry, drugs* (properly *dried* roots), and Germ. *trocken*.

67. *Fond*, i.e. foolish, its original, and in Shakespeare commonest, meaning; "a very foolish, fond old man," *Lear*, IV. 7, 60. Middle E. *fon* = 'a fool,' and *fond* = 'made like a fool;' i.e. it is past part. of *fonnen*. Consequently the *d* is a proper suffix, representing the participial termination, and not, as we might at first sight think, the excrescent *d* that sometimes comes after *n* in a final accented syllable; e.g. in *hind* from M.E. *hine*. Skeat, *Principles*, 370, 474.

69. An echo of *Genesis*, 1. 27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him."

Express, i.e. exact. *Express* in Shakespeare implies accuracy or directness of words (putting *Hamlet*, II. 2. 317 on one side where it = *expressive*); from exactness of speech comes the idea—precision in anything. Lat. *expressus*.

71. *Ounce.* Also written *once;* it was a kind of lynx—*felis uncia*. Pliny speaks of it as being not a European animal: "The onces be likewise taken for strange and forrein, and of all foure-footed beasts they *have the quickest* eye and see best"—*Natural History*, Holland's *Translation, bk.* XXVIII. chap. VIII. p. 316. The word once appears in

all the Romance languages; e.g. F. *once*, Span. *onza*, Port. *onça*, and Ital. *lonza* (i.e. *l'onza*). Its derivation is unknown; possibly Persian *yúz*, a panther, lynx. *Yúz* when nasalised is not far from *once*. Brachet makes the suggestion. For oriental words in English see note on l. 674.

72. A departure from Homer's account, which represents Circe's victims as changed entirely into beasts. Masson notes that this partial metamorphosis suited better the purposes of the stage. Each character would wear a mask representing some animal's head, as does Bottom in *Midsummer N. D.* Cf. the stage-direction that follows—"headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women."

73. *Perfect*, i.e. complete; the idea of completeness led to that of excellence. Both Milton's editions print *perfect*. Usually he prefers *perfet;* the latter obviously reflects the influence of Fr. *parfait*. The spelling of the word was quite arbitrary. In Shakespeare the quartos twice give *perfit;* so the folios in two other passages. Cf. Robynson's translation of the *Utopia:* "in you is so perfitte lernynge," p. 25; but p. 105, "to perfet blessednes our nature is allured," Pitt Press ed.

74. Milton has not followed Homer; cf. *Odyssey*, x. 237 et seq.: "Now when she had given the cup and they had drunk it off, presently she smote them with a wand, and in the styes of the swine she penned them. So they had the head and voice, the bristles and the shape of swine, *but their mind abode even as of old.* Thus were they penned there weeping"—Butcher and Lang's translation. Perhaps Homer's account gives greater pathos: Circe's victims are conscious of the contrast between their present and past; and pathos is largely a matter of self-appreciated contrast. Milton made the change as a means of emphasizing the completeness of the power of Comus, i.e. the deadliness of the pleasure he had to offer.

76. Cf. *Odyssey*, x. 235, 36. Milton recollected also the description of the Lotophagi in the ninth book of the *Odyssey*, 94 et seq., "Now whosoever of them did eat the honey-sweet fruit of the lotus, had no more wish to bring tidings nor to come back, but there he chose to abide with the lotus-eating men, ever feeding on the lotus, and forgetful of his homeward way" (Butcher and Lang). Plato has a fine metaphorical application of the story in the eighth book of the *Republic;* and it would be superfluous to do more than mention Tennyson's *Lotos-eaters.*

78. i.e. *pauci quos æquus amavit*
Jupiter. *Aeneid* VI. 129, 130.

80. The simile is repeated in *P. L.* I. 744—46. There, as here, the rhythm of the verses closely reproduces the motion described; for which reason they may be quoted:

"And with the setting sun
Dropped from the zenith like a falling star,
On Lemnos, the Ægean isle."

The full vowel-sound of the last line—*Ægean isle*—is clearly intended to suggest rest, i.e. the cessation of the god's flight. For a similar effect cf. 340.

81. *Convoy*, 'escort.' Fr. *convoi* is from Low Lat. *conviare*. The same word as *convey*.

83. i.e. robes dyed in the tints of the rainbow; Iris being the goddess of the rainbow and "many-colour'd messenger" of Juno, *Tempest*, IV. I. 76. Milton repeats the idea in *P. L.* XI. 244:

"Over his lucid arms
A military vest of purple flowed;
.....Iris had dipt the woof."

Derivatives from *Iris* are F. *irisé* and *iridescent*.

Woof. It should be spelt *oof*. The *w* was prefixed because popular etymology derived *woof* direct from *weave;* which is incorrect. Middle English *oof* (by contraction) = A. S. *ówef;* i.e. A. S. ó contracted from the preposition *on* = 'upon,' and *wef* (modern *weft*) meaning the threads that cross the warp. *Woof* therefore does come originally from A. S. *wefan;* only not in the way people supposed.

86—91. The compliment to Lawes is repeated at 494—96. Milton chooses his epithets—"soft pipe," "smooth-dittied song"—with careful reference to the qualities of Lawes' music. See the introductory note on the composer, and compare the language of Milton's Sonnet to his friend.

87. *Knows to*. For the construction (where we should insert *how*) cf. *Lyc.* 10, 11:

"He knew
Himself to sing."

The idiom is an obvious classicism, on the model of the infinitive after words like ἐπίσταμαι, *calleo*.

87, 88. For the alliteration cf. *Arcades*, 47.

89. *Office* i.e. duty, *officium*.

90. *Likeliest.* 'Most fitting;' so 2 *Henry IV*, III. 2. 273: "They are your likeliest men; and I would have you served with the best." Not far removed from *likely*='pleasing;' as we say, 'a likely lad.'

91, 92. i.e. best qualified to lend the help that this occasion requires.

92. *Viewless*, 'invisible.' Cf. *The Passion*, 50. Milton remembered Claudio's "viewless winds," *Measure for M.* III. 1. 124. The termination *less*, purely Saxon, is now active: *viewless* in modern E. would mean 'having no view.' But in the English of Shakespeare and Milton adjectival and participial endings had not become stereotyped. See note on l. 349.

The Attendant Spirit moves from the stage, and Comus appears with his followers. Strictly this was the Anti-masque, or comic interlude, and would have been treated as such at greater length by Ben Jonson or Shirley. See *Introduction*. What we may perhaps call the second Anti-masque is introduced at 957.

Stage-direction. The stage-direction in the *Cambridge MS.* omits several points here introduced: e.g. there is no mention of torches; nor have the characters 'glistering' apparel. It is easy to see why: Milton himself had had no experience of writing for the stage; probably he had not often been inside a theatre. When he wrote *Comus* he thought chiefly of the poetry and the moral which it enforced; mere scenic details could be left to Lawes and others more conversant with stage-requirements. Lawes, who had been so busy earlier in the year over the production of Shirley's *Triumph of Peace* and Carew's *Cœlum Britannicum*, may have suggested the torches which would add greatly to the effectiveness of the scene.

Comus would wear a fantastic dress to remind the audience of his supernatural powers; cf. the allusion in line 153 to his "quaint habits." Campion in one of his Masques brings "two enchanters" on the stage—Rumour and Error; the latter dressed "in a skin coat scaled like a serpent, and an antic habit painted with snakes, a hair of curled snakes, and a deformed Vizard"—Bullen's *Campion*, p. 216. Symbolical garb of this kind was much employed, as was only natural, Masques dealing so often with allegory.

Rout of Monsters. *Rout*='band,' is common in Spenser and Shakespeare. French *route* comes from Lat. *rupta*=(i) "a defeat, *flying mass of* broken troops, (ii) a fragment of an army, a troop"—*Skeat.* *Route*='way' is the same word. *Rupta* often means a 'road' *in mediæval Lat.* texts, *via* having been originally understood.

The Anti-masque in Browne's *Inner Temple* entertainment is described very quaintly. A confused troop of animals rushes on to the stage, "beinge ſuch as by Circe were ſuppoſed to haue beene tranſformed (havinge ye mindes of men ſtill) into theeſe ſhapes followinge:

2 w^th^ heartes, heades and bodyes as Actæon is,
2 like Midas, w^th^ Aſſes eares, pictur'd,
2 like wolues as Lycaon is drawne,
2 like Baboons.

Grillus (of whom Plutarche writes in his morralles) in ye ſhape of a hagge"—Hazlitt's ed., Roxburghe Library, II. 250.

Glistering. Referring, probably, to the cloth of silver and tinsel (see l. 877), which were used a good deal on the stage.

They come in, etc. The *Cambridge MS.* is more concise: Intrant κωμάζοντες, says the direction. But it was scarcely necessary to emphasize so pointedly the derivation of *Comus.*

93. Keightley notes that Milton has adapted Shakespeare's converse description of the morning-star, *Measure for M.* IV. 2. 218, "Look the unfolding star calls up the shepherd." In the one case the star is Hesperus; in the other, Phosphorus:

"Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
For what is one, the first, the last"—
In Memoriam, CXXI.

95—97. Milton may have had in his mind the classical belief that the waves of the Atlantic hissed as the fiery wheels of the sun's chariot touched them; cf. Juvenal's

Audiet Herculeo stridentem gurgite solem,

XIV. 280, where Professor Mayor quotes numerous parallels; to which might be added the lines in Milton's own poem *Naturam non Pati Senium,* 25—28:

Tu quoque, Phœbe, tui casus imitabere nati
Præcipiti curru, subitaque ferere ruina
Pronus, et extincta fumabit lampade Nereus,
Et dabit attonito feralia sibila ponto.

96. *Allay.* 'Steep,' 'cook;' the metaphor, perhaps, of *allay*= *alloy;* see below. There were three verbs *allay*, quite separate in origin, but akin *in form* and meaning: wherefore identified. There was (i) *a purely English* word *allay*, from A. S. *álecgan*='to lay down;'

formed from *lecgan* 'to lay,' the causal verb of *licgan* 'to lie;' and *á*, the A. S. intensive prefix. In Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, III. 11. 273 it is spelt *alaien*. The *l* was doubled from false analogy. In some words—e.g. *accurse*, *affright*, *allay*—the A. S. prefix *á* was confused with French and Latin *ac* or *al* (according to assimilation) = *ad*. Strictly we should write *a-curse*, *a-fright*, *a-lay*, just as we do write *a-bide*. *Allay*, then, from *álecgan*, = 'to reduce,' 'quell.' (ii) There was a Middle English verb *aleggen*, 'to alleviate,' from O. F. *aleger*, Low Lat. *alleuiare;* cf. *Shepheards Cal. March*, 5. In the XIVth century both words—(i) and (ii)—were spelt *aleggen*. Hence at that time to *aleggen peine* might mean either 'to quell pain,' or 'to lighten it.' Naturally the verbs were confused. Then (iii) we have *allay* = 'to mix,' now spelt *alloy*, on the analogy of French *aloyer*. The history of no. (iii) is curious. O. F. *aleyer* or *alayer* = 'to mix,' 'unite;' from Lat. *alligare*. The verb appeared in English as *alay* or *allay*. It was specially used of mixing liquids. Dr Murray quotes from Sir Thomas Elyot's *Castle of Helth* (dating from the reign of Henry VIIIth), "Whyte wine alayd with much water;" cf. Shakespeare's "allaying Tiber," *Coriolanus*, II. 1. 53, imitated by Lovelace in the famous *To Althea from Prison*. But to mix water with wine is to reduce the strength of the latter; in fact to "quell" it. Hence *allay* no. (iii), like *allay* no. (ii), was more or less merged in no. (i); we may say that it retained its original sense of uniting only in one connection, viz. the mixing or debasing of metals; and then it was written not *allay* but *alloy*. The change in form was due to French *aloyer*. French people thought that *alayer* or *aleyer* (from *alligare*) was derived from *a lai* or *a lei* = *ad legem*, because metals were mixed *ad legem*, i.e. according to a certain standard in the coinage. When O. F. *lai* or *lei* became *loi*, *alayer* or *aleyer* passed to *aloyer;* cf. *aloi* = 'a standard of value.' The English verb followed suit, so that the word which Sir Thomas Elyot used practically lost its identity: spelt *allay* it was merged in *allay* no. (i): when it kept its old meaning 'to mix' it had to adapt itself to French *aloyer* and appear as *alloy*. *Allay* illustrates the tendency to form-confluence in language. See l. 313.

> 97. *Steep*. Standing on the seashore we can verify the accuracy of *steep*. Tennyson gives us the same graphic emphasis in *The Progress of Spring*, VI.:

"The slant seas leaning on the mangrove copse."

For a similar studied use of a descriptive epithet see line 375.

98, 99. Amplified in *P. L.* IV. 539—43:

> "Where Heaven
> With Earth and Ocean meets, the setting Sun
> Slowly descended, and with right aspect
> Against the eastern gate of Paradise
> Levelled his evening rays."

101. The imagery of *Psalm* XIX. 5, "In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun: which cometh forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber."

104. *Jollity.* Some of the qualities here apostrophised figure as allegorical *dramatis personæ* in the Masque-literature of the time. Members of Milton's audience might have seen the procession through London of Shirley's *Triumph of Peace;* in which case they would certainly have noticed "Jollity and Laughter: Jollity in a flame-coloured suit, but tricked like a morice-dancer, with scarfs and napkins (i.e. handkerchiefs), his hat fashioned like a cone, with a little fall. Laughter in a long side coat of several colours, laughing, Vizards on his breast and back."—Shirley's *Works* (Dyce's ed.), VI. 259.

Jolly belongs to the not very large class of Scandinavian words imported through the French. The modern F. *joli* was in O. F. *jolif*, "jolly, gay, trim, fine" (Cotgrave). *Jolif* appeared in Middle E. under various forms—*jolif, jolef, joly.* O. F. *jolivte*, the noun, became in Middle E. *jolifte* and *jolitee* (Chaucer). The Scandinavian base is seen in A. S. *gýlan*='make merry,' 'keep festival;' Dutch *joelen* 'to revel;' and English *Yule*, 'time of revelry.' See Skeat s.v. *Yule*, with his *Middle E. Dict.* s.v. *jolif.*

105. *Rosy twine*, i.e. twined roses. Cf. *Nativity Ode*, 226.

107. *Rigour.* It will be noticed that *Comus* is full of these personified abstractions; the use of them (to which, perhaps, the allegorising tendency of the Masque may have contributed something) is a characteristic of Milton's early style; cf. the *Nativity Ode, Il Pen., L'Al. passim.* In XVIIIth century poetry this rather tricky artifice became a mannerism. Gray was a conspicuous offender. It was an aspect of the "poetical diction" which Wordsworth denounced in the famous preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, 1815. Usually the substantive is accompanied by an adjective—e.g. "pure-eyed Faith," "*white-handed Hope,*" *l.* 213.

109. *Sour*, i.e. morose, as sometimes in Shakespeare; e.g.

Richard III. I. 4. 46—the folio reading—: "With that sour ferryman which poets write of," viz. Charon.

110. *Saws*, i.e. maxims. The Justice in *As You Like It*, II. 7. 156 (the "seven ages of man" passage) is "full of wise saws." *Saw*, *say*, *saga* (Icelandic) are allied words.

111. *Fire.* Alluding to the old theory that everything is composed of four elements—earth, water, fire and air; the two last being the lighter elements. "I am fire and air," says Cleopatra (v. 2. 292) when she is about to die: henceforth she will be free of the earthy substance that clogs her spirit.

112. *Quire.* Spelt, as pronounced, *quire* till the close of the XVIIth century (*New English Dict.*). Cf. Cotgrave: "*Chœur;* the quire of a church, a troop of singers." We sometimes find the form *quirister* i.e. chorister. The modern *choir* represents a desire to approximate the word to its Latin original, *chorus*. Earle notes that *quire* was one of the earliest Latin or French words in our language in which the letter *q* appeared. *Q* is a Latin letter; Anglo-Saxon writers expressed the sound *qu* by *cw*. *Q* began to be recognised at the beginning of the XIIIth century; and before the end of the century *qu* had displaced *cw* in many Anglo-Saxon words; e.g. *queen* for A.S. *cwén*. Earle, *Philology of the English Tongue*, p. 142.

113. Anticipated in the *Vacation Exercise*, 40; "the spheres of watchful fire." For Milton's conception of the 'spheres' see *Arcades*, 64, note.

115. *Sounds.* 'Straits.' A.S. *sund* meant (amongst other things) 'a strait of the sea that could be *swum* across;' i.e. cognate with *swim*.

116. *Wavering morrice*, i.e. an undulating dance, obviously imitated in *Endymion* IV. where the four Seasons join in a "floating morris." Another name was *Morisco*, i.e. *Moorish* dance. It is said to have been introduced into England in the reign of Edward III when John of Gaunt returned from Spain. A morris (to keep the more usual spelling) formed, and in some counties still forms, part of the rustic festivities at Whitsuntide and May-day; cf. *Henry V.* II. 4. 25: "England were busied with a Whitsun morris;" and *All's Well*, II. 2. 25, "As fit as ten groats is for the hand of an attorney...a morris for May-day." Stow in the *Survey of London*, 1613, p. 9 writes: "I find also that in the moneth of May, the Citizens of London of all estates, lightly in euery *Parish, or sometimes* two or three parishes ioyning togither, had their *seuerall mayings*, and did fetch in Maypoles, with diuerse warlike *shewes, with* good Archers, Morice dauncers and other deuises for

pastime all the day long, and towards the Euening they had stage playes." A detailed description of the morris may be found in Douce's *Illustrations of Shakespeare*, Dissertation III. Perhaps the word has not been often used (in poetry) since Wordsworth's couplet:

"In shoals and bands, a morrice train,
Thou greet'st the traveller in the lane."
To the Daisy.

117. *Tawny sands.* A small point, worth noting: Milton wrote "yellow sands" (*Cambridge MS*), and then substituted *tawny* to avoid too obvious comparison with Shakespeare; cf. *Midsummer N. D.* II. 2. 67, "And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands." Still more, Ariel's song "Come unto these yellow sands," *Tempest*, I. 2. 376. The nymph in *Endymion* II. ruled over

"Grotto-sands
Tawny and gold."

In his early works Keats treated Milton very much as Milton in *Comus* treated the *Faithful Shepherdess* of Fletcher, or as Vergil dealt with Ennius.

118. *Pert.* Used twice by Shakespeare to mean 'lively,' 'alert' (Schmidt); "Awake the pert and nimble spirit of youth," *Midsummer N. D.* I. 1. 13. So Cotgrave to much the same effect; "*Accointer*, to make jolly, peart, quaint, comely." But *pert* had, and now invariably has, an uncomplimentary sense, viz. 'saucy,' the diversity in meaning being accounted for thus. There were two words: (i) *pert=perk*, 'smart;' cf. *The Shepheards Calender, Februarie:* "Perke as a Peacock." (ii) *Pert*, short for *malapert*, O. F. *mal*='ill,' *apert*='expert:' i.e. *mal-apert*='badly expert'='mischievous.' The two sources were confused, and *pert* has survived in the sense *malapert*.

Faeries. Faerie, modern *fairy*, is a collective noun; it means 'enchantment;' in early English *land of fairie*='land of enchantment.' Strictly an elf is not a *fairy*, but a *fay*. The incorrect use is prior to Shakespeare. *Fay* is from O. F. *fae*=modern *fée;* cf. Portuguese *fada*, Ital. *fata*. Each comes from Low Lat. word *fata*, 'goddess of destiny' (*fatum*). According to Brachet, an inscription of the time of Diocletian "uses *fata* for *Parca*, so leaving no doubt as to the exact meaning of this late word."

Dapper. Original sense 'brave;' cf. G. *tapfer*='bold.' Later it came to mean, as now, 'spruce,' 'dainty.' Cotgrave explains *godinet* by "*Prettie, dapper*, feat, peart;" and the glosse to the Shepheards Calender,

October, has "Dapper, pretye." In the *Hesperides* Herrick speaks of "many a dapper chorister" (*The Temple*). The epithet, then, is exactly applicable to an elf.

Elves. The Glosse to the *Shepheards Calender, June*, records the old theory as to the derivation of *elf:* "Sooth is, that when all Italy was distraicte into the Factions of the Guelfes and the Gibelins, being two famous houses in Florence, the name began through their great mischiefes and many outrages to be so odious, or rather dreadfull, in the peoples eares, that, if theyr children at any time were frowarde and wanton, they would say to them that the Guelfe or the Gibeline came. Which words nowe from them (as many things els) be come into our usage, and for Guelfes and Gibelines, we say Elfes and Goblins." For *Goblin* see line 436. *Elf* is purely Teutonic: A. S. *œlf*, G. *elf.*

122. Comus celebrates the night time in his twofold character of magician and patron of license. Cf. the reference in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, II. 7. 3, to

"Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind:"

where *dark-working*='who work in the dark.'

Gray's *Installation Ode* begins rather curiously:

"Hence! Avaunt! ('tis holy ground)
Comus, and his midnight crew."

128—130. Cotytto, or Cotys, was a Thracian goddess, worshipped by the Edoni. The Cotyttia, a festival held in her honour, took place at night. Her worship "was adopted by several Greek states, chiefly those which were induced by their commercial interest to maintain friendly relations with Thrace"—Smith's *Dict. of Antiquities.*

These licentious rites were secret, as we may infer from Horace, *Epode* XVII. 56, 57:

Inultus ut tu riseris Cotyttia
Volgata:

and they appear to have penetrated to Athens; cf. Juvenal, II. 91, 92:

Talia secreta coluerunt orgia tæda
Cecropiam soliti Baptæ lassare Cotytto.

Perhaps Juvenal's lines (cf. *secreta tæda*) suggested Milton's "secret *flame.*"

131. *Called*, i.e. invoked.

Dragon. Alluding perhaps to the idea that the chariot of the night was drawn by dragons. Drayton in the *Man in the Moon* (431) speaks of Diana "summoning the dragons that her chariot draw." Cf. *Cymbeline*, II. 2. 48: "Swift, swift, you dragons of the night." There is the same reference in *Midsummer N. D.* III. 2. 379, and *Il Pen.* 59, "while Cynthia checks her dragon yoke." Strictly, Ceres was the only goddess to whom Roman poets assigned a car harnessed with dragons.

132. *Stygian darkness*, i.e. darkness as of the nether world. Styx, one of the four rivers of Hades, "the flood of deadly hate," *P.L.* 577, is a synonym of hell. Cf. line [redacted] From στυγεῖν.

Spet, where we should write *spit*, was not uncommon. In *Merchant of Venice*, I. 3. 113, both Quartos and F_1 have "spet upon my Jewish gaberdine," changed in modern texts to *spit*. The form occurs several times in Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas.

134. *Ebon*, i.e. black; "death's ebon dart," *Venus and Adonis*, 948. The form used by Spenser is closer to the etymology *ebenus*, ἔβενος; cf. *F.Q.* II. 7. 52:

"Trees of bitter Gall, and Heben sad."

135. *Hecate.* The goddess of sorcery; professors of the black arts claimed her patronage. See 535, note. The allusion to her charioteering is conventional. Reginald Scot complained "that certaine wicked women, following Sathans provocations, beleeve and professe, that in the night times they ride abroad with Diana (i.e. Hecate), the goddesse of the *Pagans*, or else with *Herodias*, with an innumerable multitude, upon certeine beasts, and passe over manie countries and nations, in the silence of the night, and doo whatsoever those fairies or ladies command"—*Discoveries of Witchcraft*, bk. 3, ch. XVI. For the scansion of the name as a dissyllable cf. *Midsummer N. D.* V. 391: "By the triple Hecate's team." Many parallels (e.g. Greene's *Friar Bacon*, XI. 18, Ben Jonson's *Sad Shepherd*, II. 3) might be quoted, down to Byron's

"Alike beheld beneath pale Hecate's blaze."
Childe Harold, II. 22.

138—140. These lines are a little mosaic of borrowed touches. Cf. 2 *Henry VI.* IV. 1. 1: "The gaudy, blabbing and remorseful day;" a passage (written by Marlowe, I believe, not Shakespeare), upon which Milton draws later in *Comus*, verses 552, 553. For *Indian steep* see *infra*, 139, note. *Tell-tale* is from *Lucrece*, 806:

"Make me not object to the tell-tale Day."

Milton, however, was not the first poet to appropriate these epithets: a

couplet in *Brittain's Ida* II. 3, gives us "tell-tale Sunne" and "all-blabbing light"—Grosart's *Phineas Fletcher*, I. p. 58.

Scout. Middle E. *scoute*, O. F. *escoute* (in Cotgrave). Cf. *écouter*, with its doublet *auscultter*, from *auscultare*.

139. *Nice.* In Elizabethan English *nice* often had a bad meaning—'finicking,' or 'super-subtle,' or 'squeamish.' This last, I think, fits the present line, the speaker being Comus. He sneers at the morning as too prudish to approve of their rites. For *nice*, implying prudery, cf. *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, III. 1. 82:

> "There is a lady in Verona here,
> Whom I affect; but she is nice and coy."

Again in the *Areopagitica* Milton writes: "But then all human learning and controversie in religious points must remove out of the world, yea, the Bible itself: for that at times relates blasphemy not nicely," i.e. in a straightforward, unsqueamish manner—Hales' ed. p. 19. Derived from O. F. *nice*, Lat. *nescius*, *nice* both in French and English retained for some time the etymological sense 'ignorant;' cf. Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, 6520 "wise and nothing nice."

Cf. *Midsummer N. D.* II. 1. 69, "the farthest steep of India," where the first quarto reads *steppe*, an obvious mistake for *steepe* which Q_2 and the folios give. This is one of the not unfrequent reminiscences of Shakespeare's play that occur in *Comus* and Milton's early poems.

141. *Descry.* 'Reveal;' cf. Spenser *F. Q.* VI. 7. 12:

> "The fearfull swayne beholding death so nie,
> Cryde out aloud for mercie, him to save;
> In lieu whereof he would to him descrie
> Great treason to him meant."

A natural meaning, since *descry* and *describe* are both from *describo*.

144. *Round.* A country-dance, the favourite one being Sellenger's (St Leger's) Round. Titania invited Oberon to join their round—*M. N. D.* II. 1. 140. Often mentioned in Herrick's *Hesperides*. For the epithets cf. *L' Al.* 34.

The Measure. "Measure denoted any dance remarkable for its well-defined rhythm, but in time the name was applied to a solemn and stately dance of the nature of a Pavan or a Minuet. The dignified character of the dance is proved by the use of the expression to 'tread a *measure;*' a phrase of frequent occurrence in the works of the Elizabethan dramatists. It is somewhat remarkable that no trace can be found of any special music to which Measures were danced; this circumstance

seems to prove that there was no definite form of dance tune for them, but that any stately and rhythmical air was used for the purpose."—Grove's *Dict. of Music*. That the Measure was, strictly, a dance of the nature described in this extract might be proved from the reference to it in *Much Ado*, II. 1. 80: "a measure, full of state, and ancientry." On the other hand the stage-direction in the *Cambridge MS.* of *Comus* leaves no doubt as to the character of the "light fantastic round" which here took place; it says: "The Measure, in a wild, rude and wanton Antic." Shakespeare once uses *measure* to signify the music that accompanied the dance—*King John*, III. 1. 104.

145. *Break off*, i.e. cease dancing. This is the "sudden stop of silence" mentioned in l. 552. For *break off*='stop' cf. *Measure for Measure*, IV. 1. 7, "break off thy song." The verses are not unlike *S. A.* 110, 111.

147. *Shrouds*, i.e. places of shelter. A. S. *scrúd*='garment;' in this sense *shroud* soon became limited to 'funeral garment,' i.e. winding-sheet; as often in Shakespeare. But it also developed a secondary, now obsolete, meaning, 'shelter;' cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, III. 3. 71, "put yourself under his shroud." So Boyer's *French Dict.* "shrowd (*or* shelter), *couvert, abri.*" Cf. l. 316.

The *Cambridge MS.* adds the direction *They all scatter.*

148. *Affright.* For the incorrect doubling of the *f* see note on *allay*, 96. *Fright* from A.S. *fyrhto* is a good instance of metathesis, *r* being very liable, as we have noted, to shift its place; cf. the numerals *third* for *thrid*, *thirteen* for *thritteen*, where *three*, Germ. *drei*, proves the original position of the *r*.

151. *Trains.* 'Allurements;' so *S. A.* 533, "fair fallacious looks, venereal trains;" and line 932. Cf. Cotgrave: "Traine: A plot, practise, conspiracie, deuise;" and Boyer, *French Dict.* "Train (a trap *or* wheedle), *embûches*, piège, amorce, ruse, attrapoire." Shakespeare has the substantive only once—*Macbeth*, IV. 3. 118:

"Macbeth
By many of these trains hath sought to win me."

The verb he uses in various places, e.g. 1 *Henry IV.* v. 2. 21, "we did train him on." For Spenser, cf. the *Faerie Queen*, I. 9. 31. From French *traîner*, itself derived from *traho*, which in Low Lat.='to betray;' cf. Du Cange: "*Trahere, idem est quod insidiose decipere, turpiter fallere, dolose seducere, quo sensu Galli suum Trahir usurpant, a Trahere formatum.*" He explains *trahere*='deceive' as a metaphor from bird-

catching: birds are drawn into the nets by baits; whence the general notion of trickery.

154. *Dazzling.* The *Cambridge MS.* has *powdered;* cf. "magic dust," l. 165. No doubt as the actor spoke these lines, 153—56, he scattered some powder in the air. A coloured light too may have been burnt behind the scene to heighten the effect.

Spongy, because it seems, like a sponge, to drink in and retain the spells; cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, II. 2. 12: "More spungy to suck in the sense of fear." Sometimes the epithet meant 'rainy;' e.g. in the *Tempest*, IV. 65, "spungy April," and *Cymbeline*, IV. 2. 349. Browne has it in that sense several times in *Britannia's Pastorals;* e.g. I. 5, "spongy clouds swoln big with water"—see Hazlitt's ed. vol. I. pp. 65, 134. *Sponge* is from Lat. *spongia* (Gk. σπογγός) through O. F. *esponge*, mod. F. *éponge;* for Lat. *sp*=O. F. *esp*=*ép*, see *Arcades*, note on *State.*

155. *Blear.* 'Deceptive.' To *blear* the eyes is to *blur*, i.e. make them dim. Dimness naturally led to the notion of deceiving. Skeat quotes Levins, 1570: "*A blirre, deceptio; to blirre, fallere.*" For a good illustration of its use cf. *Taming of the Shrew*, V. 2. 120: "while counterfeit supposes blear'd thine eyne;" i.e. while you were fooled and did not see what was happening. Possibly *blear* and *blur* are akin to *blink.* This would account for the curious expression "blear-eyed as a cat;" cats are not dim-sighted, but they blink a good deal. See *Mayhew and Skeat*, s.v. *bleren*, the Middle E. verb='to dim.'

156. *False presentments*, i.e. imaginary pictures. Cf. Hamlet's "counterfeit presentment" where 'representation' or 'picture' is the sense required, III. 4, 52.

157. *Quaint.* Almost in its limited modern sense 'eccentric.' But *quaint* in the English of Shakespeare and Milton often meant something 'prettily decorated,' 'dainty,' 'neat;' e.g. in *Taming of the Shrew*, III. 2. 149: "A gown more quaint, more pleasing;" *Much Ado*, III. 4. 22, "a fine, quaint, graceful...fashion." So in *P. L.* IX. 35:

"emblazoned shields,
Impresses quaint,"

i.e. pretty heraldic devices. This would suit the present verse: the dress of Comus was at once strange and ornamented. Spenser uses the epithet='fastidious;'

"she nothing quaint,
Nor sdeignfull of so homely fashion,
Sate downe upon the dusty ground anon"—

F. Q. III. 7. 10;

and in Cotgrave we find "*Coint:* quaint, compt, neat, fine." These extracts shew how wide was the signification of the word as compared with its one meaning in modern English, viz. 'odd.' Rightly derived by Diez from *cognitus*—cf. *acquaint* from *adcognitare;* wrongly by Du Cange from *comptus*. The latter says, s.v. *Cointises:* "*Galli* Coints *dicebant cultos, ornatos, elegantes,* Comptos, *unde vocis origo. Hinc* contoier *pro* ornare." It almost seems as if, in Earle's words, *quaint* had drawn its body or physical formation from the one source, *cognitus*, and its mind or sentiment from the other, *comptus*.

Habits, i.e. dress; Lat. *habitus*. Extant only in the compound 'riding-habit.' It is not clear when *habit* in this sense passed out of currency; certainly not before Addison's time. Cf. *The Spectator Club:* "He has all his life dressed very well, and remembered habits as others do men."

161. *Glozing*. 'Flattering;' with the idea of falsehood. Cf. *P. L.* III. 93, "For man will hearken to his glozing lies." *Gloze* is the Middle English *glossen*='to make glosses;' the history of *glosse* being as follows. From Gk. γλῶσσα, signifying (i) the tongue, (ii) a language, (iii) a word, or a word that has to be explained i.e. γλώσσημα. In this last sense it passed into Latin; cf. Forcellini: "*proprie glossæ vocantur vocabula obscuriora et minus usitata, quæ interpretatione indigent, cujusmodi sunt ea quæ certe sunt dialecti propria, eoque aliena a lingua communi.*" Next (iv) from meaning the word which required comment *glossa* stood for the comment itself; cf. again Forcellini: "*accipitur etiam pro interpretatione, seu explicatione eorum quæ ab aliis obscure scripta fuere.*" But comments are too often false, perverting the sense of the original which they profess to explain: hence (v) the notion of falsehood in *gloss* and *gloze*, which may be aptly illustrated by a passage in Ford's *Perkin Warbeck*, I. 2:

> "You *construe* my griefs to so hard a sense,
> That where the *text* is argument of pity,
> Matter of earnest love, your *gloss* corrupts it."
> Gifford's ed. II. 17.

Cf. too *Henry V.* I. 2. 38—41. The Archbishop of Canterbury is supporting the claim of Henry to the crown of France. There is, he argues, only one obstacle—the provision

> "'*In terram Salicam mulieres ne succedant*,
> No woman shall succeed in Salique land:'
> Which Salique land the French unjustly gloze
> To be the realm of France;"

i.e. falsely interpret as applying to France. *Glozing*='deceitful' is not uncommon in Elizabethan writers:

"For he could well his glozing speaches frame"—
Faerie Queene, III. 8. 14.

Shelley remembered the history of the word when he wrote:

"Tomes
Of reasoned wrong, glozed on by ignorance"—
Prometheus, III. 4.

162. *Baited.* *Bait* is Scandinavian; Icelandic *bita*='to bite:' the causal verb of this is *beita*='make to bite;' and the Icelandic sound *ei* commonly appears as *ai* or *ay* in mod. English (*Principles of Etymology*, p. 463). For instance, *hail!* as an exclamation is the same as Icelandic *heill*, used in greetings. A *bait*, therefore, ='an enticement to feed.' To *bait* horses is to let them eat.

163. *Wind me*, i.e. obtain his confidence. Needlessly changed in some editions to *win*. Shakespeare has *wind* two or three times with the sense 'getting an unfair advantage over a person;' e.g. *Lear*, I. 2. 106, "seek him out: wind me into him, I pray you."

165. *Virtue*, i.e. peculiar power; cf. *virtuous*, 621 and *Il Pen.* 113.

167. *Gear.* 'Business.' Properly *gear*='apparatus,' 'tackle,' the sense which it retains in compounds: *travelling*, or *fishing*,—*gear*, etc. In Elizabethan English it usually has the wider meaning of 'affair,' 'matter in hand.' Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, II. 4. 107 "here's goodly gear," i.e. as we might say colloquially, 'a pretty business.' So *Titus Andronicus*, IV. 3. 52, "come, to this gear"='let us set about it.' A.S. *gearo*='ready;' whence *yare*, *yarely* ('briskly'), the transition from *g* to *y* being very slight, since *g* preceding *e* or *i* probably had almost a *y* sound in Saxon times. For a long period—12th to 14th century—this sound, half *y*, half *g*, was represented by a letter 3 which afterwards dropped out of use. When this letter became obsolete the words in which it occurred mostly settled down to the regular *y* sound. See *Mayhew and Skeat*, pp. 266—269, Earle's *English Tongue*, pp. 130, 131.

166—9. The edition of 1673 differs from that of 1645. I have kept to the text of the latter.

168. *Fairly.* 'Softly;' "soft and fair, friar"—*Much Ado*, V. 4. 72.

169. Comus here steps back into the wood.

170. *Noise.* Sometimes in XVIIth century English a compli-

mentary word. Shakespeare uses it (without irony) of music, e.g. in *The Tempest*, III. 2. 144; so Milton in the *Nativity Ode*, 97. The etymology is much disputed: possibly from *nausea* (Greek *ναυσία* Latinised), the connection being—seasickness, then annoyance, then quarrel, then the clamour that attends a quarrel (Brachet). Others connect with Lat. *noxia*=*noxa*.

174. *Hinds*. 'Peasants.' The earlier form was *hine*, 'a domestic;' cf. the Old E. *hine-hede*='service;' akin to A.S. *hīn*, 'a house,' from the root seen in *κεῖμαι*, *civis* and—on the Teutonic side—*home*, *hamlet*, etc. For the excrescent *d* see note on *fond*, l. 67. *Hind* belonged to the class of words which represented, in Trench's phrase, "the broad basis" of English; the words, that is, which touched closely the life of the conquered Saxons, and refused to make way for Norman alternatives. In the eyes of his Norman lord a countryman was a 'villain,' (*Lear*, III. 7. 78) i.e. *villanus;* for his fellow-labourers he remained a *hind* or *churl*. Eventually both *hind* and *villain* yielded to *peasant*.

175—177. i.e. at a harvest-home such as Herrick pictures in the *Hesperides*, e.g. *The Country Life*. Cf. *L'Al.* 91—114. *Pan's Anniversary* is the title and subject of one of Ben Jonson's Masques.

175. *Granges*. *Grange* had three meanings—(i) A barn or granary:

> "Thy cellars fillèd with such choice of wine—
> And of all graines such plenty in thy grange."
> Grosart's *Sylvester*, II. p. 28.

This is the etymological sense, *Grange* being derived through the French from Low Lat. *Granea*. Cf. Du Cange: "*granea, locus, seu aedes, ubi grana frumentaria reconduntur, nostris* Grange." [*Granea* would become *grania*, then *granja*, lastly *grange*.] *Granges*='barns' suits the present line. We rarely find the word used thus in modern verse, but cf. Tennyson's *Demeter:*

> "Once more the reaper in the gleam of dawn
> Will see me by the landmark far away,
> Rejoicing in the harvest and the grange."

So Matthew Arnold in the *Scholar Gipsy:*

> "Then sought thy straw in some sequester'd grange."

(ii) *Grange* meant a country-house, as it usually does now. Nash in his tract, *Christ's Teares over Jerusalem*, speaking of the plague, complains that the poor must remain in the city, while "*ritch men haue theyr* country granges to fly to."—Prose Workes,

Huth Library, IV. p. 246. In the Ballad of Flodden Feilde *grange* is applied to the country-seat of the Egerton family—Bishop Percy's Folio MS. ed. Hales and Furnivall, vol. i. p.. 338. And Cotgrave has: "Beauregard: A summer house or graunge; a house for recreation or pleasure."

(iii) *Grange* was applied to lonely, isolated houses, this use being, according to Warton, common in the eastern counties of England. Hence the point of Brabantio's reply to Iago in *Othello*, I. 1. 106:

"What tell'st thou me of robbing? this is Venice;
My house is not a grange;"

i.e. not a place where he could be robbed and nobody the wiser. It would be superfluous to mention the "moated grange" of *Measure for Measure* and Tennyson's *Mariana*.

178. *Swilled insolence.* Anticipating the rather quaint lines in *P. L.* I. 501—2:

"Sons
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine."

Swill is almost always used offensively: cf. *Richard III.* v. 2. 9:

"swills your warm blood;"

where the subject of the verb is "this foul swine," the king.

179. *Wassailers.* 'Revellers;' formed from *wassail:* as to which Skeat writes: "Originally a drinking of a health, from the Northern English *wæs hál*, answering to A. S. *wes hál*, lit. 'be whole,' a form of wishing good health. Here *wes* is imperative sing. of *wesan*, to be; and *hál* is the same as mod. E. *whole.*" The second half of the compound is seen more clearly in *hale;* but *hale* ('strong,' 'hearty') and *whole* are identical words—what Skeat calls 'doublets.'

The use of the word *wassail*, which from signifying this salutation in drinking (cf. the *Prosit!* of German student-life) came to mean 'a revel' or 'drinking-bout,' might be copiously illustrated. Bullokar's *Expositor* (1616) has "*Wassaile*, a term usual heretofore for quaffing and carowsing." Cf. several passages in Shakespeare, e.g. *Love's L. L.* v. 2. 318, "at wakes and wassails;" 2 *Henry IV.* I. 2. 179, "A wassail candle, my lord," i.e. fit for a wassail; and *Macbeth*, I. 7. 64, where Lady Macbeth promises to overcome the chamberlains "with wine and wassail." In Ben Jonson's *Masque of Christmas (1616)* numerous allegorical *dramatis personæ* appear, amongst them *being Father Christmas* with his ten sons and daughters. One of the *latter is Wassel*, "her page bearing a brown bowl, drest with ribands."

Perhaps no poet has celebrated the word and its associations more tenderly than Herrick. In the *In Memoriam*, cv. ("Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm") it seems a little pedantic.

180. *Inform.* 'Guide,' 'direct;' cf. *S. A.* 333—6:

"If old respect
.....hither hath inform'd
Your younger feet."

181. *Blind*, i.e. obscure, not an uncommon meaning in Elizabethan English. Cf. Robynson's translation of the *Utopia:* "those lawes, which either be in number mo then be hable to be read, or else blinder and darker, then that anye man can well understand them," Pitt Press ed. p. 126. Shakespeare has: "The blind cave of night."—*Richard III.* v. 3. 62. Perhaps the sole survival of this use in modern English is our expression "blind alley."

188. *Grey-hooded.* Clearly the original of Keats'

"She sings but to her love, nor e'er conceives
How tiptoe Night holds back her dark grey hood"—
Endymion, I.

The reference to a palmer in the next line makes the colour *gray* appropriate. Cf. the description in one of Greene's lyrics of Love dressed as a pilgrim:

"Down the valley gan he track,
Bag and bottle at his back,
In a surcoat all of grey;
Such wear palmers on the way,
When with scrip and staff they see
Jesus' grave on Calvary."

The verse has a suggestion of *Arcades*, 54.

189. *Sad.* 'Sober,' 'serious,' without any notion of sorrow; cf. *sadly* in line 509. The original sense was 'sated,' A. S. *sæd* being akin to Latin *satis*. Then the idea 'satisfied' passed to that of "serious, firm, sober, discreet, grave" (*Mayhew and Skeat*, s.v.). This meaning was common; cf. the *Utopia:* "I can not tell whether it were best to reherse the communication that folowed, for it was not very sad," p. 44, Pitt Press ed.; where Professor Lumby notes that in Wycliffe's version of the New Test. Peter is called "a sad stone," i.e. one firmly *fixed*. He quotes also from Chaucer, Man of Law, "A *company of chapmen* riche and thereto sadde and trewe," i.e. decorous.

Country-people in the north of England speak of bread being "sad," when they mean that it is heavy.

Votarist. Used of anyone who had taken a vow (*votum*); here a vow of pilgrimage. Shakespeare prefers the form *votary*, *Love's L. L.* II. 37 and IV. 2. 141; but we find *votarist* in *Timon of Athens*, IV. 3. 27, "I am no idle votarist."

Weed, i.e. dress; A. S. *wæd*='garment.' The word has become curiously specialised. Now the plural, *weeds*, is always used, signifying only one kind of dress. But in Elizabethan English we often find the singular, *weed*, and the sense is not limited to any particular sort of clothing. Cf. *Midsummer N. D.* II. 1. 256: "Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in." "Dank and dropping weeds" is Milton's translation of *uvida vestimenta* in Horace, *Odes*, I. 5. 15. The exact phrase of our text occurs in the *Faerie Queen*, II. 1. 52: "weake wretch, I wrapt myself in Palmers weed," where the stanza refers to the story of the enchantress Acrasia, a part of Spenser's poem which, as we have seen, supplied Milton with several hints. A Palmer (in Church Latin *palmarius*) was "one who bore a palm-branch in memory of having been to the Holy Land" (Skeat).

191—92. Milton is partial to this cumbrous form of indirect question; among not infrequent instances in *S. A.* cf. line 1380:

"How thou wilt here come off surmounts my reach."

195—225. From "else O thievish Night" down to "tufted grove," (225) is omitted in the *Bridgewater MS.*; perhaps to lighten the part of the young lady; perhaps from motives of delicacy (Masson, III. 442).

196. *Felonious*, i.e. wicked or thievish. Cf. "felon winds" *Lycidas*, 91. Pope has "felon hate," *Odyssey*, IV. 712. O. F. *félon*, 'a felon,' is from Low Lat. *fellonem*, accus. of *fello*, 'a traitor.' The latter may be Celtic and really cognate with *fallere*, though Brachet marks its origin unknown.

197—200. An obvious and somewhat overworn piece of imagery: cf.

"the pale stars
Quenched their everlasting lamps in night."
Giles Fletcher, *Christ's Triumph over Death*, 26.

Numerous parallels might be quoted down to Shelley's "The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light"—*Adonais* XIX. Shakespeare quaintly compared the stars to candles in *Romeo and Juliet*, III. 5. 59 —"*night's candles* are burnt out;" and repeated the simile in *Macbeth*, II. 1. 5 and elsewhere.

204. *Single*, i.e. complete. In 369 *single*='mere.'

205—209. It does not seem necessary to refer the idea of these verses directly to the supernatural music in the *Tempest*. Milton was drawing upon a popular superstition; cf. his allusion in *P. R.* II. 274 to the "spirits of air, and woods, and springs." No doubt many of his audience believed in these "calling shapes" and "airy tongues" of which mediæval romance is full. There is a similar passage in the *Faithful Shepherdess*, I:

> "Voices calling me in dead of night
> To make me follow.....
> Through mire and standing pools, to find my ruin."—
> *Beaumont and Fletcher*, I. p. 265.—Moxon's ed.

207. *Beckoning*. Like the ghost in *Hamlet*, I. 4. 58.

208. *Airy tongues*. Cf. *Endymion*, II.:

> "Follow
> Where airy voices lead;"

and later (IV.):

> "Never more
> Shall airy voices cheat me to the shore."

Probably due to *Comus*.

Syllable, i.e. pronounce clearly.

212. *Siding*, i.e. going by the side; hence 'defending.' Chapman describing the procession of a Masque through London writes: "Euery one of these horse had two Moores...that for State sided them."—*Works* (Pearson's Reprint), III. 93.

213. "White-handed mistress, one sweet word with thee," says Berowne to the princess in *Love's Labour's Lost*, V. 2. 230. There the epithet was a mere compliment: here it is a piece of symbolism.

214. *Girt with golden wings*. Possibly a reminiscence of *Psalm* lxviii. 13: "yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." Cf. *Il Pen.* 52.

215. *Chastity*. A departure from the ordinary Trinity of Faith, Hope and Charity (to keep the Authorised Version of ἀγαπή). *Comus*, as we have said, is an enforcement of the doctrine intensely sacred in Milton's eye—the doctrine of purity; and it is worth noting that the substantive *chastity* occurs seven times in the poem; the adjective *chaste* four times. Cf. lines 78—99.

216. *The Cambridge MS.* has some pretty lines, afterwards rejected by the poet:

"I see ye visibly; and while I see ye,
This dusky hollow is a Paradise,
And Heaven-gates o'er my head: now I believe."

217. *Supreme.* Scan *súpreme;* see note on l. 273. The sense is: 'he who uses all evil powers as agents to execute his displeasure against wicked men would send...'

219. *Glistering.* Shakespeare has *glister* rather more often than *glitter;* e.g. in the usually misquoted line in the *Merchant of Venice,* II. 7. 65, "All that glisters is not gold." Cf. Gray on the *Death of a Favourite Cat. Glister* occurs once only in the Authorised Version—1 *Chronicles,* xxix. 2.

221. *Was I deceived.* A moment before she had expressed the belief that providence would, if necessary, interpose to protect her. The rift in the clouds seems an omen: the moonlight is the "glistering guardian."

223, 224. Milton employs sparingly, but always with fine effect, the artifice of verbal repetition. For a good example we may take *P. L.* VII. 25, 26:

"though fallen on evil days,
On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues;"

or *S. A.* 80, 81:

"O dark, dark, dark amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse."

No modern poet uses this device more beautifully than Tennyson.

224. Cf. the proverb "no cloud without a silver lining."

225. *Casts.* We should expect *cast* after *does* in l. 223.

228. *New-enlivened,* i.e. by the favourable sign in the sky.

230. The editors think that this appeal to the Echo may have been suggested by a scene in Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels,* I. 1. But it is unnecessary to fix upon any special work. The Masque-writer, like the playwright, employed certain stereotyped devices, and addressing the Echo may almost be classed among them. We find it used in one of the earliest of printed Masques, those, namely, that were performed before Queen Elizabeth in 1592, 1593. Warton in his comparison of *Comus* with the *Old Wives' Tale* noted that the Echo is invoked in the latter (*cf.* the *Introduction*); and from a passage in Ben Jonson's *Penates* we may infer that in pastoral verse such addresses were a traditional feature. The country folk, he says,

"Cleave the air with many a shout,
As they would hunt poor Echo out
Of yonder valley, who doth flout
Their rustic noise. To visit whom
You shall behold whole bevies come
Of gaudy nymphs—"

It is easy to see why the trick was so popular. The Masque was much concerned with the presentment of fantastic scenes, where everything made for picturesqueness of effect and suggestiveness of sound to gratify eye and ear. The reply of the Echo would, of course, be counterfeited, and this would add to the idealism of the scene. And then these appeals were the musician's opportunity: Lawes could bring in his "smooth-dittied" song.

231. *Airy shell*, i.e. the vault of Heaven. Cf. the *Nativity Ode*, 100.

232. There seems to be no classical authority for this association of Echo and Meander, though we meet with it in Gray's *Progress of Poesy*, 69—72, an imitation perhaps of the present passage. Meander is the modern Mendereh, rising in Phrygia. The circuitous course of the river has given us the word *meander*.

Margent. Shakespeare invariably uses this form; never *margin* or *marge*, except in the compound *sea-marge*, which occurs once, *Tempest*, IV. 1. 69.

234. *Love-lorn*. *Lorn* is the past part. of A. S. *leósan; lost* being the weak form. For strong verbs dropping to weak verbs see l. 449, note. *Forlorn* is exactly the Ger. *verloren; for* and *ver* being identical, intensive prefixes.

237. *Thy Narcissus.*

"Eke wailfull Eccho, forgetting her deare
Narcissus, their last accents doth resownd."
Spenser, *A Pastorall Aeglogue.*—Globe ed., 567.

Echo, one of the Oreads or mountain nymphs, fell in love with Narcissus and, the love not being returned, pined away till only her voice remained; as we learn from Ovid, *Met.* III. 356 et seq.

241. Cf. the epithet 'sphereborn' applied to the "harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse"—*At a Solemn Music*, 2.

242. *Translated.* 'Raised aloft.' Derived from *transfero* = 'transfer from *one place to* another,' and once common in this sense: "By *turninge, translatinge*, and removinge thies markes into other places

they maye destroye theire enemies navies," *Utopia*, Bk. II. p. 68, Pitt Press ed. A bishop can be 'translated' from one see to another. A frequent Shakespearian meaning is 'transformed:' e.g. *Midsummer N. D.* III. 1. 122, "Bottom, thou art translated."

243. i.e. re-echo the music of heaven. In the *Cambridge MS.* the verse begins *And hold a counterpoint.* Perhaps *counterpoint*, the musical term, seemed too technical. Note that the verse is an Alexandrine, the only one in the poem (*Introduction*). Milton was fond of the metre; see the *Nativity Ode*, or the lines on the *Death of a Fair Infant.* Coming at the close of a stanza an Alexandrine rounds it off effectively, but versifiers used the trick so freely that Pope in the *Essay on Criticism* protested.

244. In the *Cambridge MS.* the return of Comus to the scene is marked by a stage-direction—*Comus looks in and speaks.* Probably he appears at the side of the stage, not revealing himself to the lady till l. 265.

244, 245. The language of the couplet is a little extravagant; but we must remember that it was inserted out of compliment to the composer and the Lady Egerton, who had sung the air.

246—8. In Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Bk. V. we read: "Touching musical harmony...so pleasing effects it hath in that very part of man which is most divine, that some have been thereby induced to think, that the soul itself by nature is or hath in it harmony." This theory the *Glosse* to the *Shepheards Calender*, *October* refers to its original holders: "What the secrete working of Musick is in the myndes of men, appeareth hereby, that some of the auncient Philosophers, and those the moste wise, as Plato and Pythagoras, held for opinion, that the mynd was made of a certaine harmonie and musicall nombers."

248. *His*, i.e. its. The possessive pronouns in English were formed from the genitive case of the personal pronouns. The genitive of the pronoun of the third person in A. S. was declined as follows:

Mas.	Fem.	Neut.
his	*hire*	*his.*

These forms served as adjective or possessive pronouns. *His* for the masculine has obviously survived: *hire* has become *her: his* for the *neuter is obsolete.* About the end of the XVIth century *its* came into *currency as the* neuter possessive pronoun and displaced his; but very *slowly. Spenser*, for example, never writes *its*: Shakespeare in only

a few passages—nine, according to Schmidt (*Lexicon*), and seven of these occur in the *Tempest* and *Winter's Tale*, plays that date from the close of Shakespeare's career. For the rest he keeps to the old idiom; cf. *Julius Cæsar*, I. 2. 124:

> "And that same eye, whose bend doth awe the world,
> Did lose *his* lustre."

That the new pronoun did not meet with ready acceptance is shown by the fact that it is not found in the Bible of 1611—our Version. Cf. *Genesis* i. 12: "and the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after *his* kind;" again iii. 15: "*It* shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise *his* heel;" and *Leviticus* xxiii. 37, "every*thing* upon *his* day." In passages where a modern poet would have no hesitation in writing *its* Milton's practice varies. Sometimes he retains the ancient idiom, *his*, as here (248) and again at line 919; in three places, *Nativity Ode*, 106, *P. L.* I. 254, *P. L.* IV. 813, he has *its;* and very often if the antecedent be feminine he avoids the difficulty by personifying the noun and saying *her*. As proving that *its* is comparatively a modernism we may note that "*the* own"="*its* own" was a common turn of language. Cf. Robynson's translation of the *Utopia*, "They marveile also that golde, whych of *the* owne nature is a thinge so unprofytable," p. 101, and p. 113, "shal it not know *the* owne wealthe?" Pitt Press ed. According to Morris this expression occurs in Hooker, 1553—1600 (*Historical Outlines*, p. 124, from which several of these references are taken).

251—2. These lines exemplify Milton's faculty for suggesting by means of metaphor—the quality in which Coleridge among modern poets is preeminent. We are to conceive of darkness as being a dusky bird whose ruffled wings cover the earth—imagery which is illustrated by the "dewy-feathered sleep" of *Il Pen.* 146, and *L'Al.* 6, where "brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings." Cf. too, the apostrophe to sleep in *Endymion* I.:

> "O magic sleep! O comfortable bird!
> That broodest o'er the troubled sea of the mind
> Till it is hushed and smoothed."

And on this bird of night falls the spell of harmony, just as in the first Pythian Ode of Pindar the eagle of Zeus was charmed to rest by *music:*

"Perching on the sceptred hand
Of Jove, the magic lulls the feather'd king
With ruffled plumes and flagging wing:
Quench'd in dark clouds of slumber lie
The terror of his beak, and light'nings of his eye."
The Progress of Poetry I. 2;

where Gray refers in the footnote to his Pindaric model. Cf. also *Empedocles on Etna*, II. 1, early and *Il Pen.* 58. The raven, of course, is chosen as symbolising darkness by its colour and as being the bird of evil omen; cf. *L' Al.* 7, "the night-raven sings." It may be objected that *smiled* strikes a false note; that, in fact, it introduces confusion of metaphor: feathers cannot smile. But analysis of metaphor rarely yields very satisfactory results; much of Shakespeare's imagery will not bear minute investigation. The poet may be granted a certain license if he pleases the imagination by a picture which is suggestive, intelligible, and not obtrusively incongruous. The present metaphor does not offend by want of harmony: on the contrary, it gratifies; and that is sufficient. Mrs Gaskell has a happy allusion to this passage: "she was late—that she knew she would be. Miss Simmonds was vexed and cross. That also she had anticipated—and had intended to smooth her raven down by extraordinary diligence."—*Mary Barton*, II. p. 27.

251. *Fall.* 'Cadence:' "That strain again! it had a dying fall," *Twelfth Night*, I. 1. 4. Cf. *close*, in l. 548.

253. Milton treats the classics a little freely. In Homer the Sirens have nothing to do with Circe. She appears in book X. of the *Odyssey:* they in bk. XII.: indeed Circe at the beginning of the latter warns Odysseus against the Singing Maidens, and recommends the expedient of anointing the ears of his sailors with the honey-sweet wax. Possibly Milton followed Browne, who in the *Inner Temple Masque* represented the Sirens as attending on the goddess.

Sirens three. In Homer only two; cf. *Odyssey*, XII. 52 and 185, where the dual is used. They were assigned to different islands: (i) In the straits of Sicily: (ii) somewhere south east of Circe's isle, Aea (as in Homer): (iii) Capri. Milton mentions two of the Sirens, Parthenope and Ligea, later on—879, 880.

254. In Odyssey, X. 350, 351 Circe is waited upon by four maidens, "*born of the wells*, and of the woods, and of the holy rivers, that flow *forward into* the salt sea." There were in Greek mythology a large

number of inferior female divinities, collectively denominated *Νύμφαι*, and subdivided into classes named according to the localities they inhabited; the Naiads being "the nymphs of fresh water, whether of rivers, lakes, brooks or wells" (*Classical Dictionary*). In *P. R.* II. 344—6, as here, Milton associates them specially with flowers. Perhaps he transferred to them the *λειμῶν' ἀνθεμόεντα* in which Homer placed the Sirens.

255. *Potent herbs.* Circe being the *dea sæva potentibus herbis*, *Æneid*, VII. 19. The Nereids gather simples for her in Ovid, *Met.* XIV. 261 et seq.; as also in *The Inner Temple Masque*—Hazlitt II. 254.

257—9. Odysseus had to sail a considerable distance beyond the island of the Sirens before he reached the straits where lay Scylla on the Italian, and Charybdis on the Sicilian, side. The voices could scarcely have penetrated so far. All through this passage Milton adapts rather than follows Homer's account of the classical figures enumerated.

This is not the only place in literature where Scylla and Charybdis fall under the influence of music. The shepherd in Silius Italicus charmed them: *Scyllæi tacuere canes; stetit atra Charybdis,—Bellum Punicum*, XIV. 467. The fame of the twin monsters survived through the mediæval verse, *incidis in Scyllam cupiens vitare Charybdim; Merchant of Venice*, III. 5. 19.

258. *Barking.* Cf. *Odyssey*, XII. 85, 86: "Therein dwelleth Scylla yelping terribly (*δεινὸν λελακυῖα*), her voice indeed is no greater than the voice of a new-born whelp;" and Vergil's *multis circum latrantibus undis*, *Æneid*, VII. 588. So the *Utopia*, p. 23, Pitt Press ed.: "For nothyng is more easye to bee founde, than bee barkynge Scyllaes."

260. *Lulled.* *Lull*='sing to rest.' Old Dutch *lullen*='sing in a humming voice.' No doubt an onomatopœic word, formed from the sound *lu lu* which nurses repeated in sending children to sleep. Cf. Cotgrave, "*Assopir:* to lay, bring, or lull, asleep;" and Minsheu (1599) "to lull as the nurse doth her childe." *Loll* is a derivative from *lull*. It looks as though the two words were occasionally confounded, or treated as interchangeable. Thus Baret (1573) has: "Lulling=flagging. *Flaccidus;*" where *lolling*, i.e. 'lounging lazily,' appears to be the sense. Again, in *Richard III.* III. 7. 72 the quartos and folios without exception read: "He is not lulling on a lewd day bed;" which most editors change to *lolling*. *Lull*, from meaning 'soothe to sleep,' came to have the wider signification—'fondle;' cf. again Cotgrave:

"*Mignarder*, to lull, dandle, cherish, make much of." This may explain Chaucer's use in *The Marchantes Tale*, 9697.

262. *Home-felt*, 'keenly felt;' *home* suggesting 'to the full.' As we say, 'pay him home,' 'drive it home.' Frequent in Shakespeare; e.g. *Measure for Measure*, IV. 3. 138: "Accuse him home and home;" *Lear*, III. 3. 13, "The injuries will be revenged home."

265. We can scarcely refrain from comparing Ferdinand's address to Miranda:

> "my prime request,
> Which I do last pronounce, is, O you wonder!
> If you be maid, or no?" *Tempest*, I. 2. 427—9.

267, 8. *Unless the goddess.....*
Dwell'st here

An abbreviated way of saying 'unless thou art the goddess that dwells.'

268. *Sylvan.* Sylvanus, originally the god of fields and forests, was in later times identified with Pan, the god of nature in general.

269. Cf. *Arcades*, 48, 49.

271. *Ill is lost*, i.e. *male perditur.*

273. *Extreme.* With the stress on the penultimate—*extreme.* In Shakespeare the tendency of dissyllabic adjectives and participles normally accented on the second syllable is to throw the accent back when they precede a noun whose accent falls on the first syllable, or a monosyllable. Thus, to take *extreme* as an example—we find:

"And éxtreme fear can neither fight nor fly," *Lucrece*, 230;

again:

> "But that the éxtreme peril of the case
> Enforced us to this execution"—*Richard III.* III. 5. 44, 45.

On the other hand:

> "Savage, extréme, rude, cruel, not to trust," *Sonnet*, 129. 4.

The principle applies in Shakespeare, and often in Milton, to a number of adjectives like *obscure, secure, supreme, sincere, complete, profane;* and participles—*exhaled, despised, dispersed.* Cf. 421, 449.

277—90. The severely Sophoclean style of this passage is curious. Even in *S. A.* (which for Goethe had "more of the antique spirit than any other production of any other modern poet," *Eckermann* in Oxenford's translation II. p. 220) we do not find a piece of στιχομυθία so long as the present. The nearest approach is the dialogue between Manoah and the Messenger, 1552 et seq. There are a few examples of the same

type of dialogue in Shakespeare's early plays (cf. *Richard III.* IV. 4. 343—361); none, I think, in the later dramas. Probably at the outset of his career Shakespeare fell somewhat under the influence of the English classical tragedy based upon Seneca. Thus the *Misfortunes of Arthur*, produced by members of Gray's Inn—amongst them was Francis Bacon, the future Lord Verulam—before Elizabeth in 1587, has several passages like the following:

G. "And fear you not so strange and uncouth war?
M. No, were they wars that grew from out the ground?
G. Nor yet your sire so huge, yourself so small?
M. The smallest axe may fell the hugest oak;"

and so on.

278. *Leavy.* So both Milton's editions. Most editors change to *leafy*. *Leavy* appears to have been more common. Shakespeare always uses it; e.g. "leavy screens," *Macbeth* v. 6. 1; *Much Ado* II. 3. 75, where it rhymes with *heavy;* and *Pericles* v. 1. 51. Coles' *Latin Dictionary* has "Leavy, *frondosus;*" and Boyer, "Leavy (or full of leaves) *Feuillu, plein de feuilles.*" Neither writes *leafy*. We have it however in the Authorised Version, 1611; cf. *Mark* xi. *Contents*, "curseth the fruitless leafy tree." *V* in place of *f* was characteristic of the southern dialects. In the old poem of *The Owl and the Nightingale*, written in Dorsetshire some time in the reign of Henry III. (1260 or thereabout), we find *vo* for *foe*, *vairer* for *fairer* etc. (Earle, p. 58). And the same pronunciation may still be heard any day in Somersetshire; *fallow field* is always (from a labourer) *vallow vield.*

279. *Near-ushering.* 'Going just ahead.'

285. *Prevented.* 'Anticipated;' frequent in Shakespeare, Spenser and other Elizabethans. The etymology of the word—*prævenio*—disappears in the modern meaning 'hinder.'

286. *Hit.* 'Guess;' metaphor of shooting at a target.

"But what it is, hard is to say,
Harder to hit"—*S. A.* 1013—14.

290. Cf. *L' Al.* 29. Hebe, the cup-bearer of the gods, *Iliad* IV. 2, stands for the personification of youth. In the lines *Ad Salsillum*, 23, 24, Milton salutes good health (*salus*) as the 'sister of Hebe' (*Hebes Germana*).

291. *What time.* 'At the time when,' *quo tempore.* Once a common idiom. *Cf. Psalm* lvi. 3, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee;" and *Titus Andronicus* IV. 3. 19:

"I made thee miserable
What time I threw the people's suffrages
On him."

So *Lycidas*, 28.

291—93. A stereotyped method in pastoral poetry of fixing the time, for which Homer's *βουλυτόνδε* may have been originally responsible. Cf. Vergil's *aspice, aratra jugo referunt suspensa juvenci, Eclogue*, II. 66.

293. *Swinked.* 'Wearied.' A. S. *swincan* = 'labour,' 'work hard;' very common in old English. Cf. *Faerie Queene* II. 7. 8:

"Honour, estate, and all this worldes good,
For which men swinck and sweat incessantly."

So the *Glosse* to the *Shepheards Calender, April:* "*Forswonck*, overlaboured," where *for* is intensive, i.e. 'thoroughly tired.' *Swinker* is a synonym of *labourer* in Cockeram's *Dictionary*, 1626. Shelley has the verb in his humorous *Letter to Maria Gisborne:*

"that dew which the gnomes drink,
When at their subterranean toil they swink."

295. *Yon.* Pointing to some part of the scenery in the background. In *Lyc.* 40, Milton conveys by a single epithet ('gadding') the same picture of the vine's straggling growth.

297—301. Milton has said something complimentary concerning all who were immediately interested in the production of *Comus:* the Earl of Bridgewater himself, 31; Henry Lawes, 84—91; Lady Alice Egerton, 244—270; and now the sons—Lord Brackley and his brother—are remembered.

297. *Port.* 'Bearing;' frequent in Shakespeare—"assume the port of Mars," *Henry V.* prologue 6. Cf. *portance* and *portaunce* in Spenser.

299. *Element.* 'Sky.' The clown in *Twelfth Night*, III. 1. 65, condemned the word as hackneyed. For a good instance of its use cf. North's *Plutarch* (Skeat's ed.) p. 97: "Touching the fires in the element, and spirits running up and down in the night, are not all these signs perhaps worth the noting?"

301. *Plighted*, i.e. folded. It suggests the involved masses of banked clouds; what Milton in the *Nativity Ode*, 146, calls "tissued clouds." *Plight* (vb. and n.), = 'fold,' was in current use; cf. *Lear* I. 1. 283:

"Time shall unfold what plighted cunning hides;"

where the variant of the quartos, *pleated*, makes the sense more obvious. Spenser has *plight* as past part. in the *Faerie Queene*, II. 7. 7—"Of rushes plight;" again in VI. 7. 43, "And on his head a roll of linnen plight." Cf. the extract from Palsgrave's *Lesclarcissement* in the note on 759. It should be spelt *plite;* and in Chaucer we find *pliten*, the verb, *Troilus* II. 697. Note that *plight* (i) = 'obligation,' nearly obsolete as noun, but common in the derived verb ("plight one's faith"), is Teutonic; whereas *plight* (ii) 'condition' ("in a sad plight") is of Romance origin and really identical with *plight* = 'fold.' In his *Dictionary* Skeat did not draw the distinction; but see the *Principles of Etymology*, p. 244, footnote. A number of words—French *pli*, *plier*, *plieur* etc., English *ply*, *plait*—are derived from *plicare;* cf. πλέκειν.

301. *Awe-strook.* Professor Masson notes (*P. L.* II. 165) that Milton usually writes *strook* rather than *struck* both as preterite and past part. We constantly find it in the quartos of Shakespeare.

308. *Allowance.* In *allow* two words have run together. *Allow* = 'approve of' is from Lat. *allaudare*. Formerly it had the stronger sense 'praise;' cf. St Paul's "that which I do I allow not," *Romans* vii. 15. *Allow* = 'make a grant to,' whence *allowance*, comes from *allocare*, a Low Latin word = 'assign,' e.g. a stipend. *Allowance* in this sense does not occur in Shakespeare, but we find it in the Authorised Version; cf. *II. Kings* xxv. 30: "and his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day."

311. *Alley.* Shakespeare uses *alley* = 'a shady walk' two or three times; e.g. in *Much Ado* I. 2. 10. The derivation of French *aller* (from which of course we get *alley*) is much disputed; possibly from *adnare*.

312. *Dingle.* "A hollow between hills: dale"—Johnson. *Dimple* and *dingle* are 'doublets,' from a Norwegian word *depil* = 'a pool.' The central idea is 'something scooped out' so as to leave a hollow place. Ben Jonson in the *Sad Shepherd*, II. 2, has a third form *dimble:*

> "Within a gloomy dimble she doth dwell,
> Down in a pit."

313. *Bosky bourn*, i.e. a stream with shrubs and trees on the banks. *Bourn* = 'brook,' Teutonic, and *bourn* = 'boundary,' Romance, must be carefully distinguished. The former is "a variant of Burn, being the form commonly used in the south of England, since the *14th c.; a small stream*, or brook; often applied (in this spelling) to *the winter bournes* or winter torrents of the chalk downs. Applied to

northern streams it is usually spelt Burn"—*New English Dictionary.* Shakespeare uses *bourn*='brook' in one passage, *Lear* III. 6. 27, "come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me," where he is quoting the words of an old ballad (1558) by William Birch. The original song (as given in the *Harleian Miscellany*, X. 260) prints not *bourn*, but *born*, showing that the word was not very clearly understood. *Bourn* survives in some proper names, e.g. Bournemouth. With regard to etymology, *bourn* or *burn* is purely Teutonic, the underlying sense being 'fountain;' cf. A.S. *burna*, G. *brunnen*, 'a spring.' See *Mayhew and Skeat*, s.v. *Bourn*='boundary,' as in Hamlet's

"undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns." III. 1. 79,

is the French *borne;* cf. *borner*, 'to limit;' and the derivation of the latter is much disputed. In Skeat's *Principles*, pp. 410—413, are some interesting remarks upon "confluence of forms;" that is to say, upon the tendency of words to flow together and become inseparable. This happens in the case of words which have a certain resemblance; and the process is assisted by the loss in our language of inflexions. Two nouns look alike: if one is clipped of a letter they will become identical: the clipping often takes place, and henceforth they are indistinguishable. Or a vowel may be changed, the half-conscious object always being to assimilate slightly different words. So perhaps in the south of England the spelling of *burn* ('brook') was affected by that of the more usual noun *bourn* ('limit').

Bosky. Cf. Low Lat. *boscum*, *buscum*, 'a wood;' O. F. *bosquet*, 'a little wood,' whence *bouquet*, and modern Fr. *bois*, English *bush*. *Bosky*, with its cognates, is confined to poetry:

"Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood."
Dream of Fair Women.

315. *Attendance*, i.e. attendants; abstract for concrete. Cf. *poverty*='poor people,' *Lear* III. 4. 26:

"You houseless poverty,
Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are;"

one of the many examples quoted by Schmidt, *Shakespeare Lexicon*, pp. 1421, 1422.

Stray, i.e. who have gone astray.

316. *Shroud*, i.e. are sheltered. Spenser in the *Present State of Ireland* deplores the robbing of travellers that prevails "for wante of

safer places to shrowde themselves in," *Globe* ed. p. 681. So *P. R.* IV. 419—20;

"Ill wast thou shrouded then,
O patient Son of God."

See note on the noun, l. 147.

317, 318. Cf. *P. R.* 279, 280:

"And now the herald lark
Left his ground-nest."

322—26. The sentiment reminds us of the Republican Milton of the Commonwealth days.

324. *Tapestry.* Usually of a scarlet tint; cf. *Taming of the Shrew* II. 1. 351, "my hangings all of Tyrian tapestry;" and Fawkes' *Translation of Theocritus*, Idyl 15:

"Lo purple tapestry arranged on high
Charms the spectator with Tyrian dye;"

"purple" having the vague force of *purpureus*. *Tapestry* is a corruption of *tapisserie*. Spenser uses the form *tapet* which looks like a direct Anglicisation of Lat. *tapete*, Gr. ταπήτιον; see *Muiopotmos* 276. Apparently the word could be applied to any sort of material. Hakluyt speaks of a "tapistrie of *feathers* of divers hues"—*Voyages* III. p. 316. Cowper laid this line under contribution when he translated the sixth *Elegy*, 49:

"In tapestried halls high-roofed the sprightly lyre
Directs the dancers;"

Milton's Latin being *auditurque chelys suspensa tapetia circum.*

325. The derivation—*courtesy* from *court*—is correct. Cf. Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, III. 67, "His courtesy gentle, smelling of the court;" and the *Faerie Queene*, VI. 1. 1:

"Of Court, it seems, men Courtesie doe call,
For that it there most useth to abound."

O. F. *court*, or *cort*, whence modern F. *cour* and English *court*, is from Lat. *cohortem*=a yard, a farm, and in the Low Latin form *cortem*, a country-house, or palace, or tribunal.

329. *Square.* 'Adjust;' cf. *All's well* II. 1. 153: "As 'tis with us that square our guess by shows," i.e. judge by external signs.

331. *Cf. Romeo and Juliet* V. 3. 21, "Muffle me, night, awhile." In the *Princess* the sea is "glazed with muffled moonlight," i.e. the light

of a moon half hidden by clouds. It seems a prosaic word, with commonplace associations, albeit very often used by Tennyson and Matthew Arnold.

332. *Wont'st.* A present tense; so *S. A.* 1487:

"Sons wont to nurse their parents in old age;"

where, however, *are* might be understood from the previous line. *Wont* as past tense, = 'was wont,' occurs in the *Nativity Ode*, 10:

"That glorious form, that light unsufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,
Wherewith he wont at Heaven's high council-table
To sit..."

They are the tenses of a now almost obsolete verb *won* = (i) 'dwell,' (ii) 'be used to.' *Won* in the former sense comes in *P. L.* VII. 457:

"where he wons
In forest wild."

It is common in Spenser; e.g. *F. Q.* III. 5. 27:

"In those same woods ye well remember may
How that a noble hunteresse did wonne."

The verb survives in the participles *wont* and *wonted*, neither being correct. The past part. of *won* should be *won-ed.* But the *ed* of a p. p. often becomes through careless pronunciation *t.* So *woned* was written *wont.* Then people forgot that *wont* was already a p. p., and added *ed:* consequently *wonted* = *won-ed-ed.*

Benison; from O. F. *beneison* (whose place has been taken by *bénédiction*), like *orison* from O.F. *oreison*, mod. *oraison*, i.e. *orationem.*

333. *Stoop.* So the "wandering moon" in *Il Pen.* 71—2:

"her head she bowed,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud."

Perhaps Keats was not unmindful of Milton when he wrote:

"The moon put forth a little diamond peak,
Bright signal that she only stooped to tie
Her silver sandals." *Endymion* IV.

Spenser applies "stouping" to the setting sun—*Shepheards Calender, March.*

Amber. Amber is a fossil resin, found chiefly along the southern

shore of the Baltic; in hue yellowish and translucent. Formerly it was supposed to be a concretion of birds' tears, a pretty superstition to which Moore alludes in *The Fire Worshippers:*

"Around thee shall glisten the loveliest amber
That ever the sorrowing sea-bird hath wept."

A favourite epithet with Tennyson, connoting obviously very diverse degrees of yellow brilliancy. Cf. the *Ode to Memory*, IV:

"What time the amber moon
Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung cloud;"

and *Margaret* I.:

"Like the tender amber round
Which the moon about her spreadeth,
Moving thro' a fleecy night."

Amber is the tint of the atmosphere in the *Lotos-Eaters*, *Choric Song* V., and of the sunrise in *L' Al.* 61.

334. *Disinherit.* 'Dispossess.' *Inherit* in Shakespeare frequently signifies 'to have,' 'possess,' without any notion, as now, of heirship; e.g. *Romeo and Juliet* I. 2. 30:

"Such delight shall you inherit at my house."

335. "Double darkness" in *Samson Agonistes*, 593, has a more tragic force; the darkness being that of blindness and death.

337—340. The construction has a certain awkwardness; the sense is: "if your influence (i.e. the moon's) be quite eclipsed, then do thou, gentle taper, from some quarter, visit us, and thou shalt be..."

340. A beautiful instance of the sound echoing the sense. The alliteration is clearly intended to suggest the pathway of brilliance which radiates out into the darkness. Possibly when he wrote the words "*rule* of light," Milton may have been thinking of a verse in his favorite poet Euripides:

λαμπρὰ μὲν ἀκτὶς ἡλίου, κανὼν σαφής,
ἔβαλλε γαῖαν. *Supplices* 650.

341, 42. A somewhat fanciful way of saying that they will direct their course by the light of the taper as a mariner does his by means of the constellations. *Star of Arcady*=any star in the constellation of the Greater Bear. *Cynosure*=the constellation of the Lesser Bear, which contains the pole star; so called from its supposed resemblance to the

shape of a dog's tail—*κυνὸς οὐρά*. The story ran (Ovid, *Met.* II. 410) that Callisto, after being turned into a she-bear by Juno, was stellified as the Greater Bear by Jupiter. She was the daughter of Lycaon—*claramque Lycaonis Arcton*, *Georg.* I. 138—king of Arcadia: whence Milton's "star of *Arcady*." Arcas, either the son of Callisto (Jupiter being the father), or the brother (the legends varied), was changed into the Lesser Bear. Greek sailors steered by the Greater Bear; the Phœnicians by the Lesser—hence "*Tyrian* Cynosure." Cf. Ovid, *Fasti* III. 107, 8:

duas Arctos quarum Cynosura petatur
Sidoniis, Helicen Graia carina notet.

For the same reason the Lesser Bear was also called *Φοινίκη*. As *Cynosura* meant literally the star to which sailors looked, *Cynosure* came to signify metaphorically (i) 'a guiding star,' (ii) 'an object on which attention is specially fixed.' For the former cf. Hacket's *Life of Abp. Williams*, I. 171: "The Countess of Buckingham was the *Cynosura* that all the Papists steered by"—*Encyclopædic Dict.* s. v. *Cynosure;* and Bishop Hall, *Cases of Conscience:* "For the guidance either of our caution or liberty, in matters of borrowing and lending, the only Cynosure is our charity"—Latham's *Johnson*. So Sylvester's *Du Bartas:*

"To the bright Lamp which serves for *Cynosure*
To all that sail upon the sea obscure."
Grosart's ed., vol. I. p. 88.

This sense, now obsolete, is required by the present verse in *Comus*. We have the other meaning in *L' Al.* 80:

"Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The Cynosure of neighbouring eyes."

It is common in modern English: "Richmond was the Cynosure on which all northern eyes were fixed—" *The Times*, in an article on the American War.

344. *Wattled cotes*, i.e. sheepfolds made with small hurdles. In Shakespeare *cote*='cottage,' *As You Like It*, II. 4. 83 and III. 2. 448. Its use here may be illustrated from the *Shepheards Calender*, *December*, 77, 78:

"And learn'd of lighter timber cotes to frame,
Such as might save my sheepe and me fro' shame;"

where the *Glosse* explains: "Sheepcotes, for such be the exercises of shepheards." Matthew Arnold borrowed the phrase in *The Scholar Gipsy:*

"Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes."

and Tennyson varied it in the *Ode to Memory*, IV.:

"Pour round my ears the livelong bleat
Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled folds."

Wattle='hurdle' is the same word as *wallet*='a bag,' the latter being a corruption of *wattle*. The underlying idea in each is 'something twined, woven together.'

345. *Pastoral reed*, i.e. the traditional shepherd's pipe.

Oaten. Cf. *Lyc.* 33, 88, and *Love's L. L.* v. 2. 913. The *oaten* pipe has been accepted by English writers as distinctly symbolical of pastoral music, without, as Mr Jerram points out in his note on *Lyc.* 33, any direct authority in the classics. In Theocritus we hear of the κάλαμος or αὐλός (i.e. reeds), or Pan's pipe, σῦριγξ. In Latin we find *calamus*, *tibia* and *cicuta* (the stem of hemlock) used in the same connection. Probably the notion of the "oaten straw" is to be traced to Vergil's *tenui avena*, in the first *Eclogue*, 2. Cf. the *Glosse* to the *Shepheards Cal.*, *October*, "Oaten reedes, Avena." But *avena* could be applied to any stalk.

Stops are the small holes in wind instruments like the flute. Cf. *Hamlet* III. 2. 366—76: "Will you play upon the *pipe*....It is as easy as lying: govern these *ventages* with your finger and thumb...these are the *stops*." Collins, who imitated Milton very often, began his *Ode to Evening* with the words "If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song...."

349. *Innumerous*. 'Innumerable;' L. *innumerus*. Cf. *P. L.* VII. 455, "innumerous living things." We find much the same shifting, irregular use of adjectival and participial terminations in Shakespeare; e.g. *unvalued*='invaluable' in *Richard III.* I. 4. 27; *unavoided*='unavoidable,' *Richard II.* II. 1. 268; *unexpressive*='inexpressible,' *As You Like It* III. 2. 10; with many other examples.

350. As Masson observes, we have from line 350 to line 475 the most continuous exposition that *Comus* contains of the central doctrine upon which the Masque turns. The idea is never absent from Milton's thoughts; but in no other part of the poem is it treated at such length.

352. "Properly *burs* mean the unopened flowers of the Burdock," *Ellacomb, Plant Lore of Shakespear*, p. 52. Several British wild plants have the prefix *bur; bur-marigold, bur-parsley*, bur-reed. From French

bourre, Low Lat. *burra* (see note on *bolt*, l. 760), applied to the hair of animals or the fluffy pollen shed by some flowers.

355—62. The Cambridge draft here shows a considerable divergence from our text. Milton wrote a rather overdrawn simile, comparing the sister to

> "Forsaken Proserpine,
> When the big rolling flakes of pitchy clouds
> And darkness wound her in."

These three lines he rejected in favour of the seven here given.

355. *Leans*, i.e. she leans, the nominative being easily understood from *her* in line 353. We might also take it intransitively, with *head* as the subject.

Fraught. The normal form of the participle; but we find *fraughted* in Shakespeare:

> "O cruel speeding!
> Fraughted with gall."—
> *Passionate Pilgrim* 269, 270.

In modern English *fraught* is always a past part., and never used except, as here, in a metaphorical sense—'fraught with danger,' etc. When we speak of lading a vessel we write *freight*. In Elizabethan English this difference was not observed. Shakespeare says:

> "e'er
> It should the good ship so have swallow'd, and
> The fraughting souls within her;"

i.e. those who made up the *freight* that the vessel carried.—*Tempest* I. 2. 12—13. For the noun *fraught=freight* cf. Marlowe, *Jew of Malta* I. 1: "Come ashore and see the fraught discharg'd." Cotgrave has: "Freteure: A fraughting, loading, and furnishing of a (hired) ship;" and he explains *fret* by "the fraught or freight of a ship, also, the hire that's paid for a ship." *Fraught* is akin to G. *fracht* 'cargo.' *Freight* is the French *fret* (cf. *fréter*, *frétement* etc.), and the misspelling *gh* was due to the influence of *fraught*, with which the word was confused. *Fret* may be cognate with *fracht;* but this is not certain.

359. *Over-exquisite*. 'Too careful,' 'too subtle;' much the same as *L. exquisitus*. Gabriel Harvey writing to Spenser says, "it hath bene the usual practise of the most exquisite and odde wittes.....rather to shewe and advance themselves that way, then any other."—Globe

Spenser, p. 710. Combined with 'odde,' *exquisite* implies super-subtlety.

360. *Cast*, i.e. conjecture the nature of; perhaps from the metaphor of casting a nativity. Cf. 2 *Henry IV.* I. 1. 166: "You cast the event of war," i.e. 'calculate.' Landor conveys the same counsel in very similar language:

"Oh seek not destined evils to divine,
Found out at last too soon."—*Gebir*, VI.

361. *While they rest unknown*,

"I had been happy.....
So I had nothing known,"

is the burden of Othello's complaint, III. 3. 346—48.

363. Alluding to the proverb "do not meet your trouble half-way." Cf. *Much Ado* I. 1. 97—99: "Good Signior Leonato, you are come to meet your trouble; the fashion of the world is to avoid cost, and you encounter it."

366. *So to seek*, i.e. so ignorant what to do, so much at a loss. The phrase implies incapacity, or want of knowledge; cf. the following instances of its use: "Perhaps some better schollars are nigh hand as farre to seeke in the rudiments,"—*Pierces Supererogation*, Grosart's *Gabriel Harvey*, II. 229: "So shall not our English poets, though they be to seek of the Greek and Latin languages, lament for lack of knowledge."—Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*, p. 169: "They do daylie practise and exercise themselves in the discipline of warre...lest they should be to seke in the feate of armes."—*Utopia*, p. 131, Pitt Press ed. We still say that a quality is 'sadly to seek' in a man when we mean that he does not possess it.

367. *Unprincipled*. 'Unversed in the principles of.' Cf. *principled* in *S. A.* 760—61:

"With goodness principled not to reject
The penitent;"

i.e. instructed by goodness.

368. *Bosoms*, i.e. the peace which goodness has in its bosom. Shakespeare (or Fletcher?) uses *bosom* as a verb='inclose in the heart,' 'carefully guard,' in *Henry VIII.* I. 1. 112:

"Bosom up my counsel,
You'll find it wholesome."

We have the participle in *L' Al.* 78:

"Bosomed high in tufted trees,"

a line which recalls Wordsworth's description of "Como, bosomed deep in chestnut groves."

369. *Single.* 'Mere.'

"Seal me there
Your single bond."—
Merchant of Venice, I. 3. 146.

370. *Not being*, i.e. she not being. Milton has several instances of the absolute case, but with the pronoun inserted. Cf. *S. A.* 462, 3:

"Dagon hath presumed,
Me overthrown, to enter lists with God."

Morris (*Historical Outlines*, p. 103) quotes Wycliffe's version of *Matthew* xxviii. 12: "Thei haw stolen him, us slepinge."

373—5. A reminiscence, probably, of *Romeo and Juliet* III. 2. 8, 9, a passage with which Milton was certainly familiar, as the description of night in lines 10 and 11 suggested the epithet "civil-suited" in *Il Pen.* 122. Cf. also the note on l. 554 of this poem. In the *Faerie Queene*, I. 1. 12:

"Vertue gives herselfe light through darknesse for to wade."

375. *Flat.* Cf. "the level brine" in *Lyc.* 98. Warton's proposal, "in the sea flat sunk," destroys all the vividness of the picture. See l. 97, with note.

Wisdom's self. Self, Germ. *selbe*, began by being an adjective= 'same.' In Shakespeare it sometimes='self-same;' cf. *Twelfth Night* I. 1. 39, where the editors of the later folios change "one self king" to "one selfsame king," through misunderstanding of the idiom. In its second stage *self* was used to strengthen the reflexive pronoun; finally it became a noun. *Wisdom's self*=Wisdom herself, would sound awkward in modern E.; but the usage was once common; cf. *Coriolanus* II. 2. 98:

"Tarquin's self he met,
And struck him."

See Morris, *Outlines*, p. 122. Cowley in his essay *Of Solitude* arrives at the conclusion that a life of isolation is suited to Learning alone. Man, he argues, before he can dwell apart from society must "learn the art and get the habit of thinking; for this too, no less than well speaking, depends upon much practice; and cogitation is *the thing which* distinguishes the solitude of a god from a wild beast. *Now because the* soul of man is not by its own nature or observation *furnished* with sufficient materials to work upon; it is necessary

for it to have continual resources to learning and books for fresh supplies, so that the solitary life will grow indigent, and be ready to starve without them...I therefore cannot much recommend solitude to a man totally illiterate."

Mr Mark Pattison notes that these verses, 375—380, possess a personal interest. They are a fragment of the poet's autobiography, exactly descriptive of the five years he spent at Horton, 1632—1637. Throughout the poems we catch from time to time a glimpse of Milton the man.

376. *Seeks to.* 'Repairs to;' a phrase that has ceased to be current, though formerly common. Shakespeare has it in *Lucrece*, 293:

"With a pure appeal seeks to the heart;"

and several instances occur in the Authorised Version—e.g. 1 *Kings* x. 24: "and all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom;" *Deuteronomy* xii. 5, "Unto his habitation shall ye seek."

377. Contrast *Il Pen.* 54, where in a description inspired by the tenth chapter of *Ezekiel* Milton speaks of "the *Cherub* Contemplation." More natural, perhaps, than the imagery of either passage is Spenser's picture of the

"aged holy man...
That day and night said his devotion,
Ne other worldly business did apply:
His name was hevenly Contemplation,
Of God and goodness was his meditation."
F. Q. 1. 10. 46.

378. *Plumes.* Some editors would change to the more usual *prune;* conversely in 1 *Henry IV.* 1. 1. 98—"makes him prune himself"—Hanmer substituted *plume.*

380. *All to-ruffled.* In Milton's editions the reading stands *all to rufft'd*, i.e. three distinct words. Some editors print *all too ruffled;* others *all-to ruffled;* and others *all to-ruffled.* The choice rests between the two last. *All-to* is a well-known difficulty. First as to the prefix *to.* (i) It meant 'asunder,' 'in pieces:' cf. German *zer*, as in *zerbrechen, zermalmen* etc.; Latin *dis.* (ii) It had an intensive force, emphasizing the sense of the verb with which it was compounded. In the glossarial index to Skeat's *Piers the Plowman*, II. p. 450 et seq., we find a number of words which illustrate both uses; e.g. *to-dryue*= 'drive *quite* away;' *to-quashte*='dashed *to pieces*;' to-broken='broken *to bits.*' *To* in this second, intensive sense was often strengthened by

the word *all*. Then the idiom became very irregular. We have three main uses: (*a*) where *all*, *to* and the verb are separate; cf. *Judges* ix. 53, "And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech's head, and all to brake his skull." (*b*) Where *to* is not merely detached from the verb but united by force of accent with the *all*; cf. *Latimer's Sermons*, 1538, "We be fallen into the dirt, and be all-to dirtied, even up to the ears." (*c*) Where *all*, *to* and verb are joined; cf. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, II. 48, "she all-to-befooled me." The *New English Dictionary* notes that *all-to* is especially frequent before verbs that commence with the prefix *be*. Now in the present line it seems to me impossible to decide which Milton intended. He may have meant the words to be distinct—*all to ruffled*; cf. the quotation from *Judges*. But *all-to ruffled* would have been equally in accordance with popular usage; cf. the quotation from *Latimer*. And again *all to-ruffled* would have been most correct, since *to* was properly a part of the verb. There is, however, just one thing that makes me incline to the text here adopted—viz. the rhythm. Reading the line quickly or slowly we cannot help treating it as a pure iambic verse in which *to* goes closely with the following, not the preceding, word.

381—82. *Light within his...breast.* There is true tragic irony in these lines. Thirty years later when Milton was himself blind he lamented in *S. A.* 160—163 the case of the soul

> "Shut up from outward light,
> To incorporate with gloomy night;
> For *inward light*, alas!
> Puts forth no visual beam."

Cf. the apostrophe "Hail, holy Light!" with which he commences the third book of *Paradise Lost*.

381—85. The sentiment expressed in *P. L.* I. 254—5:

> "The mind is its own place, and in itself
> Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven;"

in other words, we are dependent on ourselves, not on external circumstances, for happiness.

382. *Centre.* That is, of the earth; cf. Hamlet's

> "I will find
> Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
> *Within* the centre."—III. 2. 157—59.

Sometimes, e.g. in *P. L.* I. 686, *centre*=the earth itself, as being,

according to the Ptolemaic system, the middle point of the universe. See note on *Arcades* 64. *Centre* has both meanings in Shakespeare.

385. Repeated in *S. A.* 155:

"Thou art become (O worst imprisonment)
The dungeon of thyself."

385—389. Cf. *Il Pen.* 167—174, where Milton paints the ideal close of the studious life.

388. Milton's anticipation of Gray's more felicitous

"Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife."

389. *Senate-house.* Referring, says one editor, to the Senate-house at Cambridge; but that building dates from the next century. Begun 1722, it was finished in 1730. Milton was thinking of the Roman *Curia.* Twenty years later Cromwell showed, April 20th, 1653, that the great English Council-chamber was not inviolable.

391. *Beads,* i.e. of the rosary; a curious touch as coming from the Puritan Milton; but every detail in the description—*cell, weeds, grey hairs* etc.—reproduces in a conventional manner the conventional picture of learned asceticism. If Milton had written *Comus* after his return from Italy we might have thought that in these lines he was simply repainting in words some picture seen in an Italian palace.

Bead originally meant *prayer;* afterwards the perforated balls used by Roman Catholics in counting their prayers were called *beads.* We find the word in several compounds, some of which are not obsolete, e.g. *beyde-roule,* "bead-roll, prayer-roll, catalogue of persons for whom prayers are to be said," *Mayhew and Skeat; bede-sang,* "the singing of the prayers," *New E. Dict.; beadsman,* one who prayed for others, as in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona,* I. 1. 18, "I will be thy beadsman;" and *beadfolk*—cf. the old play *Calisto and Melibœa* (1520):

"This knight and I both thy beadfolks shall be,"
Dodsley, vol. I. p. 85.

The A. S. noun was *bed* or *gebed;* cf. Germ. *gebet,* 'prayer.' The verb *bid*='to pray,' extant in the compound *bidding-prayer,* from A. S. *biddan,* has been ousted by *bid*='to command,' from A. S. *béodan.* Skeat, *Principles,* pp. 164, 167.

Maple dish. In the sixth *Elegy,* 61, he prefers 'beechen:'

Stet prope fagineo pellucida lympha catillo.

393—402. The sentiment expressed by Rosalind in As You Like

It, I. 3. 106, 7, when Celia proposes that they should fly from the court to the forest of Arden.

395. *Unenchanted.* 'Not to be enchanted;' see note on 349.

The slaying of the dragon—Ladon—who with the Hesperides guarded the golden apples which Ge had given to Hera at her marriage with Zeus, was one of the labours of Hercules—*Æneid* IV. 484. We have already seen (note on l. 4) that part of this passage, 393—397, previously appeared in those introductory verses that Milton rejected.

398. *Unsunned heaps.* 'Unsunned' because kept secret—perhaps buried (*defosso incubat auro*); and the epithet may have been suggested by the *Faerie Queene*, II. 7, *Argument*, where

> "Guyon findes Mamon in a delve
> Sunning his threasure hore."

Cf. too *Cymbeline* II. 5. 13, "Chaste as unsunn'd snow."

401. *Wink on.* 'Be blind to.' Cf. *Macbeth* I. 4. 52:

> "Stars hide your fires;
> Let not light see my black and deep desires:
> The eye wink at the hand,"

i.e. let not the eye perceive what the hand is doing. This seems to suit our text. 'Danger' is not to see its opportunity, and, not seeing, is to let the maiden pass unmolested; a thing, argues the brother, for which we cannot hope. But the personification of danger is strained. The passage would be much simpler if Milton had written *Desire*.

Opportunity. Cf. *Lucrece:*

> "O Opportunity! thy guilt is great:
> 'Tis thou that execut'st the traitor's treason,"
>
> 871 et seq.

King John put the same truth differently:

> "How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds
> Makes ill deeds done."
>
> IV. 2. 219—20.

404. *It recks me not.* Cf. *Lyc.* 123: "What recks it them? what need they?" Shakespeare always uses *reck* ('care for,' 'mind') personally; e.g. in *Hamlet* I. 3. 51: "He recks not his own rede"= 'does not trouble to follow the advice he gives to others.' So Milton *in P. L.* IX. 173, "I reck not." *Reckoning*='heed,' occurs in line 642. In the Seventeenth Article of Religion the curious word wretchlessness

='carelessness' has the same origin, viz. A. S. *récan*, 'to care,' and A. S. *récelás*, 'careless;' the *w* having been prefixed from false analogy. See note on *rapt*, sometimes misspelt *wrapt*, line 794.

408. *Infer.* 'Argue.' In *P. L.* VII. 116 *infer*='prove,' as sometimes in Shakespeare, e.g. *King John*, III. 1. 213.

410—12. i.e. 'where the chances seem equal, there being as much ground for hope as for fear, I incline to the former.'

Equal poise. Cf. *Measure for Measure*, II. 4. 68, 69:

"Pleas'd you to do't, at peril of your soul,
Were equal poise of sin and charity."

That is, 'If you consented to do this there would be as much benevolence in the action as guilt.' *Poise:* cf. O. F. *peiser, poiser:* modern *peser*. O. F. *pois* is now misspelt *poids* from a notion that it comes from Latin *pondus;* really derived from *pensum*='a quantity weighed out.'

411. *Event*='issue;' L. *eventus;* common in Shakespeare.

413. *Squint.* Ben Jonson speaks of "squint-eyed Slander," *The Barriers.*

419. *If.* 'Even if.'

420—424. Milton, almost certainly, was thinking of the description of Parthenia in Phineas Fletcher's *Purple Island*, X. 27—32:

"A warlike maid,
Parthenia, all in steel and gilded arms;"

see Grosart's ed., vol. IV. 289—292.

421. Cf. *Hamlet*, I. 4. 51—53:

"What may this mean,
That thou, dead corse, again in cómplete steel,
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon?"

For the accent on first syllable—*cómplete*—see note on line 273.

422—424. In the *Cambridge MS.* the passage stands:

"And may, on every needful accident,
Be it not done in pride or wilful attempting,
Walk through huge forests."

The second verse Milton has incorporated lower down (431), with a slight variation. By adding l. 422 of our text he increased the clearness of the picture.

423. *Trace.* 'Pass through;' reminiscent of *Midsummer* N. D.

II. 1. 25: "to trace the forests wild." *Trace* in *Much Ado*, III. 1. 161='walk up and down'—"As we do trace this alley." In the *Faerie Queene*, IV. 8. 34, the sense is 'travel:'

"How all the way the Prince on footpace trac'd."

Unharboured, i.e. unharbouring='yielding no *shelter*,' the proper sense of *harbour*. Cf. Tennyson's *Geraint and Enid*, "O friend, I seek a harbourage for the night." *Harbour* is the Icelandic *her-bergi*, 'an army-shelter,' the Middle E. form being *herberwe*. For the first half cf. Germ. *heer*='an army;' for the second, cf. Germ. *bergen*='to conceal.' French *auberge*, 'an inn,' is the same word. In the *Chanson de Roland* (XIth cent.) O. F. *herberge* meant 'a military station,' being one of the war-terms derived from Old High German. See Brachet, s. v. *auberge*, with *Mayhew and Skeat*, s. v. *herberwe*.

424. *Infamous hills*. "And now he haunts th'infamous woods and downs," Phineas Fletcher, *Piscatorie Eclogues*, I. 14. *Infamous*='of evil name,' an obvious Latinism; cf. Horace's *infames scopulos*, *Odes*, I. 3. 20. We might compare "opprobrious hill" in *P. L.* I. 403, applied to the southern part of the Mount of Olives. The accentuation—*infámous*—occurs in the *Death of a Fair Infant*, 12:

"Thereby to wipe away th'infámous blot."

426. *Bandite*. The word had not got naturalised in its present form. Shakespeare uses the quasi-Italian *banditto*, 2 *Henry VI.* IV. 1. 135, the correct form being *bandito*. The noun illustrates the illogical treatment which language receives from the people. In the singular *bandito* has been Anglicised into *bandit;* but we seldom write *bandits* for the plural; we prefer *banditti*, and repeat Shakespeare's blunder of spelling it with two *t*'s. A *bandit* was a man who had been placed under the *ban*, i.e. excommunicated by proclamation of the Church, which still reminds us of the derivation of the word by the phrase *marriage-banns*.

Mountaineer. An opprobrious term, as always in Shakespeare; "Call'd me traitor, mountaineer," *Cymbeline*, IV. 2. 120. People who lived in mountain-districts might naturally be taken as types of savage un-civilization. Very parallel is the use of *uplandish* in a contemptuous sense; cf. Puttenham's *Art of Poesy*, "Any *uplandish* village or corner of a realme, where there is no resort but of poor rustical people," p. 157, *Arber's Reprint*.

The termination *eer* in a word like *pioneer* represents the French

ier; pioneer=pionnier. Some words ending in *eer* are arbitrarily formed upon this model; that is to say, they have no French original in *ier*. *Mountaineer* is a case in point; the French noun being *montagnard*. These substantives in *eer*, whether really representative of a French forerunner in *ier* (e.g. *pioneer*), or fashioned from analogy (e.g. *mountaineer*), have the French accent, i.e. at the end.

428. *Very.* In Shakespeare *very* is much oftener adjective than adverb, being used, as here, to give the substantive its full sense. Compare the *Creed*—"Very God of very God."

429. *Horrid.* A conventional epithet (cf. *P. L.* IX. 185), in which we recognise the Latin *horridus* rather than the modern *horrid*. Cf. *Horror*, l. 38.

430. *Unblenched.* 'Unfaltering:' "if he but blench, (i.e. start) I know my course," says *Hamlet* (II. 2. 626), when he plans the scene which is to betray the king into involuntary admission of guilt. *Blench* and *blanch* are identical.

432. *Some say.* A convenient phrase (cf. *Hamlet*, I. 1. 158) by which Milton does not commit himself. Apparently he endorsed the popular beliefs as to evil powers; cf. *Il Pen.* 93, 94, and the *Nativity Ode*, Stanza XXVI.

Walks. The technical term; cf. *Winter's Tale*, III. 3. 17:

> "I have heard (but not believ'd), the spirits o' the dead
> May walk again."

433. In Ben Jonson's *Masque of Queens* eleven witches appear,

> "From the lakes, and from the fens,
> From the rocks, and from the dens;"

and the author explains in a footnote that "these places, in their own nature dire and dismal, are reckoned up as the fittest from whence such persons should come, and were notably observed by that excellent Lucan in the description of his Erichtho, lib. 6." The witch in the *Sad Shepherd*, II. 2,

> "Steals forth...in the fogs,
> And rotten mists, upon the fens and bogs."

Or fire. The "evil thing" attended by a flame (*ignis fatuus*) is the spirit variously known as Jack-o'-the-Lanthorn and Will-o'-the-Wisp. Cf. *L'Al.* 104 (where Milton's folklore is incorrect, Friar Rush being *quite a separate character*) and *P. L.* IX. 634—42:

"As when a wandering fire,

. . . . . .

(Which oft, they say, some evil spirit attends),
Hovering and blazing with delusive light,
Misleads the amazed night-wanderer."

This last line seems to be from *Midsummer N. D.* II. 1. 39.

434. *Blue.* There were witches to represent most colours. Hecate in Middleton's play *The Witch* I. 2 summons her familiars: "white spirits, black spirits, grey spirits, red spirits;" see Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, Chap. xxxiii., whence Middleton borrowed. The white witch was innocuous: she possessed supernatural powers and used them for good purposes, as in Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* Cf. the *Spectator*, 131: "the character which I go under in part of the neighbourhood is what they here call a white witch." *Blue* in the present verse might have the same force as *blue-eyed* in the *Tempest*, I. 2. 269, where the epithet (of which *blear-eyed* is a needless emendation) refers not to the colour of the eyes, but to the dark circles under them that come from physical exhaustion. Cf. *Lucrece*, 1587 and *As You Like It*, III. 2. 393. 'Haggard-looking' would then be the idea conveyed.

Stubborn, because refusing to be exorcised or 'laid.' "*Ghost unlaid* forbear thee!" is the prayer of Guiderius for Imogen in *Cymbeline*, IV. 2. 278. The only tongue in which a spirit could be addressed with effect was Latin; cf. Marcellus' "Thou art a scholar; speak to it Horatio"—*Hamlet*, I. 1. 42. Reginald Scot in the *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, Bk XV. Chaps viii.—xiv. gives a number of the proper forms of conjuration.

435. The "foul fiend" in *Lear*, III. 4. 121, "begins at curfew, and walks till the first clock;" and the spirits in *The Tempest*, V. 1. 39—40

"rejoice
To hear the solemn curfew."

Magic chains. Cf. "each fettered ghost," *Nativity Ode*, 234.

Curfew time, i.e. eight o'clock; cf. *Il Pen.* 74. *Curfew = couvre-feu*, O. F. *covre-feu*, i.e. time for putting out lights; *couvrir* being from *co-operire*, *feu* from *focum*. The first half of the word is a good instance of two syllables, *couvre*, blending into one, *cur*, by syncope. This is due entirely to the stress of accent. Cf. *kerchief = couvre-chef* i.e. *head-cover*. Such amalgamation is frequent in compound words. See Morris, *Outlines*, pp. 77, 78. Shakespeare in one passage, *Romeo and Juliet*, IV. 4. 4, uses *curfew bell* of the early matins bell, the

explanation being that some houses had only one bell which served the double purpose, at dark and at day break.

436. *Goblin.* For the old derivation from *Ghibeline* see line 118. It probably influenced the spelling of the word; cf. the *Faerie Queene*, II. 10. 73:

"His sonne was Elfinel, who overcame
The wicked Gobbelines in bloody field."

Goblin is from O. F. *gobelin*, Low Lat. *gobelinum; gobelinus* being the diminutive of Low L. *cobalus* 'mountain-sprite;' cf. Gk. κόβαλος, 'a rogue.' Usually the Germ. *kobold* is connected with them, but it may be a Teutonic word, meaning 'house-spirit;' the first half cognate with A. S. *cófa*, 'a chamber.'

Faery. Rarely used, as here, of a malignant power; cf. *Comedy of Errors*, IV. 2. 35:

"A fiend, a fairy, pitiless and rough;"

where, however, many editors (the Cambridge included) read *fury*, despite the folios.

Of the mine. It was an old and universal superstition (upon which Grimm gives much information) that mines were inhabited by evil spirits. Cf. Fenton's *Secrete Wonders of Nature*, 1569: "There appeare at this day many strange visions and wicked sprites in the metal mines of the great Turke;" and again: "In the metal mine at Anneburg was a mettal spirite which killed twelve workmen; the same causing the rest to forsake the myne, albeit it was very riche." So Keats in *Lamia:*

"Empty the haunted air and gnomèd mine;"

i.e. mine where gnomes (sprites) dwell.

438—40. 'Shall I appeal to the works of Greek philosophers for testimony to the power of purity?' Milton panegyrises the philosophers of Athens in the most famous passage of *P. R.*, IV. 240—284.

441. *Dian.* The type of chastity.

443. *Brinded.* 'Spotted' or 'streaked.' Cf. *Macbeth*, IV. 1. 1. Coles' *Latin Dictionary* gives: "*Brinded, variegatus.*" Milton speaks of the lion's "brinded mane" in *P. L.* VII. 466. Two other forms were in use, *brindle* and *brindled.* The latter alone is extant with us, but in New England they still speak of a "brindle yearling;" and *brindle* is the older. The termination *le* is Saxon; it signified the possession of a *quality;* but people forgot this fact, and gave the word the more familiar termination *ed.* The same thing often happened with

words in *el:* thus *new-fangel* was changed to *new-fangled.* At other times the termination *sh* was taken: hence *tickle* (which Shakespeare uses *Measure for Measure*, I. 2. 177) became *ticklish.* Every one knew that *ed* and *sh* were endings that implied the possession of a quality; it was forgotten that *el* and *le* had the same force (Earle, pp. 376, 377). Properly *brinded*='marked with a *brand.*' The vowel-mutation, *brand* to *brind,* is shown in Skeat, *Principles*, p. 466.

444. *Mountain-pard.* A kind of wild cat, usually called *cat-o'-mountain;* cf. *Merry Wives*, II. 2. 27, and *The Tempest*, IV. 1. 262, where Mr Aldis Wright quotes from Topsell, *History of Four-footed Beasts:* "The greatest therefore they call Panthers. The second they call Pardals, and the third, least of all, they call Leopards, which for the same cause in England is called a Cat of the Mountain," p. 448. Boyer's *French Dictionary* has: "Cat-a-mountain, (a Mongrel Sort of wild Cat) *Chat-pard.*"

445. *Bolt of Cupid. Bolt*='arrow;' but Cupid was said to have two kinds of darts, one with a golden, the other with a leaden tip; the former to cause, the latter to repel, love:

> *fugat hoc, facit illud amorem:*
> *Quod facit, auratum est, et cuspide fulget acuta:*
> *Quod fugat, obtusum est, et habet sub arundine plumbum.*
> Ovid, *Met.* I. 469—71.

Cf. the *Glosse* to the *Shepheards Calendar, March:* "He (Cupid), is sayd also to have shafts, some leaden, some golden: that is, both pleasure for the gracious and loved, and sorrow for the lover that is disdayned or forsaken." Massinger is fond of the allusion.

447. The *Gorgoneion* or head of Medusa (whom Perseus had slain) was represented on the shield of Athene; cf. *Iliad*, v. 738—41: "about her shoulders cast she (viz. Athene) the tasselled ægis terrible.....and therein is the dreadful monster's Gorgon head, dreadful and grim, portent of ægis-bearing Zeus." It came "in more civilised times to be regarded as merely an ἀποτρόπαιον or charm to avert the evil eye and other dangers" (Leaf). We meet with references to the story several times in Milton's works; e.g. in the Latin poem, *Naturam non pati Senium*, 22, *Horribilisque retecta Gorgone Pallas.* In *P. L.* II. 611 the Medusa guards the river of Lethe "with Gorgonian terrour."

Snaky-headed, because, according to one version, her hair had been changed into serpents by Athene.

449. *Freezed.* The weak form of the preterite is not uncommon in

contemporary writers. Strong verbs suffer perpetually from the incursions of the weak conjugation.

Congealed. For the scansion cf. *Richard III.* I. 2. 55—6:

"Henry's wounds
Open their cóngeal'd mouths and bleed afresh."

See note on l. 273.

450—53. Milton points the moral; and we may here note how he has taken two old-world, seemingly outworn legends and invested them with an entirely new significance. It is Plato's method. Plato will often select some popular expression and apply it in a novel, metaphysical sense; or some popular belief, and read into it a fresh meaning, thereby raising superstition to the higher plane of philosophy.

451. *Dashed.* 'Put out of countenance.'

"*Iago.* I see, this hath a little dash'd your spirits.
Othello. Not a jot, not a jot"—III. 3. 214.

452. *Blank.* Cf. *blank* as a verb, = 'make to turn pale,' in *S. A.* 471: "And with confusion blank his worshippers." So *Hamlet*, III. 2. 230, "Each opposite that blanks the face of joy." The adjective now is somewhat colloquial, 'blank dismay,' 'blank confusion,' etc. being expressions that belong rather to every-day speech than to poetry. *Blanch* = 'to whiten' and *blank* are cognates with *blanch* = *blench* (line 430, note); but they retain more distinctly the original idea of *whiteness.* Milton, for example, uses *blanc* as an exact equivalent of the French *blanc:*

"To the blanc Moon
Her office they prescribed"—*P. L.* x. 656.

Perhaps the only ordinary word in which we recognise at once the French *blanc* is *blanket*, F. *blanchet*, a diminutive of *blanc;* so called because properly of a white colour.

454. *Sincerely.* 'Entirely:' cf. the lines *On Time:*

"Everything that is sincerely good
And perfectly divine."

Sincere = 'pure,' 'without alloy' (i.e. L. *sincerus*) in 1 *Peter*, ii. 2: "desire the sincere milk of the word."

455. *Liveried.* *Livery* (French *livrée*) could be used in Milton's time of any kind of dress; cf. *P. L.* IV. 598—99:

"twilight gray
Had in her sober livery all things clad."

But usually the word bore the meaning to which it is almost limited in modern E.; cf. Spenser's *State of Ireland*, "Liverye is also called the upper garment which serving men weareth, soe called (as I suppose) for that it is delivered and taken from him at pleasure," *Globe ed.* p. 623. Cf. also the French phrase *habits de livrée* = 'clothes delivered yearly by the king to the officers of his household.' Middle E. *lyverè* signified 'something handed over,' not necessarily dress; cf. Cotgrave's explanation of *la livrée des chanoines*, "their liverie or corrodie; their stipend, exhibition, dailie allowance in victuals or money." The legal phrase *Sue livery* (used in *Richard II.* II. 1. 203, 204) preserves the original notion of *delivering*. Fr. *livrer* is from *liberare* = 'to abandon' (in Low Latin). See *Mayhew and Skeat*, s.v. *lyverè*.

Lackey. 'Attend.' *Lackeying* is Theobald's fine emendation, (and no Shakespearian critic has been more successful as an emendator than Theobald), in *Antony and Cleopatra*, I. 4. 46, where Ff. read *lacking*:

"Goes to and back, lackeying the varying tide."

Steevens illustrated the use of the word, which has deteriorated in sense, by two quotations from Chapman's Homer:

"Who would willingly
Lacky along so vast a lake of brine"—*Odyssey* v.;

and *Iliad* XXIV.:

"My guide to Argos either ship'd or lackying thy side."

Lackey is from the O. F. *laquay* "a lackey, foot-boy," (Cotgrave). *Laquay* itself, modern F. *laquais*, is of disputed origin, but Brachet derives from Spanish *lacayo* 'a servant,' treating it as one of the many Spanish words which took root in France through the occupation of French soil by Spanish armies at the end of the XVIth century.

This idea of the Guardian Angel watching over men is often present to Milton; see line 658, with *S. A.* 1431 and the *Death of a Fair Infant*, 57—61. Cf. the *Faerie Queene*, II. 8. 1, 2.

458. Cf. 784 (note) and *Arcades*, 73; the latter is very like *Midsummer N. D.* III. 1. 163.

459. *Heavenly habitants*. 'Habitants of heaven,' i.e. the "liveried angels" of 455. In the three passages in Shakespeare where *converse* 'intercourse' occurs the stress falls, as here, on the second syllable—convérse.

460—63. This fine conception of self-perfectibility, "till body up to spirit work," is developed at greater length in P. L. V. 469—503; see in particular lines 496—99:

"And from these corporal nutriments, perhaps,
Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,
Improved by tract of time, and wing'd ascend
Ethereal."

461. *Temple of the mind.* Employing the imagery of Scripture: cf. *St John*, ii. 21, "He spake of the temple of his body;" and 1 *Corinthians*, iii. 17, "The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." Shakespeare frequently uses the metaphor; never with greater effect than in *Macbeth*, II. 3. 73, where Macduff announces the murder of Duncan:

"Murder hath broke ope
The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence
The life o' the building."

463—69. Milton passes to the converse of the previous idea. As the body may by self-discipline become soul, the soul by the self-indulgence of its possessor may become body.

465. *Lewd.* A.S. *lǽwed*='ignorant.' *Lewd* preserved this sense for a long time; e.g. in Chaucer. Even Spenser writes *lewdly*='foolishly,' 'ignorantly;' cf. *Shepheards Calender, Februarie:*

"Lewdly complainest thou, læsie ladde,
Of Winters wracke for making thee sadde."

From signifying 'ignorant,' *lewd* passed to the meaning 'base,' 'depraved;' whence, by an easy transition, 'lustful.' The latter is the invariable acceptation of the epithet in modern English. In Shakespeare and seventeenth century writers the context of a passage determines whether *lewd* connotes general baseness, or the special aspect thereof—lust. See *Mayhew and Skeat*, s.v. *lewd.*

Lavish. The spelling of the word in old English was very arbitrary, varying between *lavish*, *laves* and *lavy*. In Robynson's translation of the *Utopia* we even find *lavasse*—"through their lavasse and prodigall spendynge"—Pitt Press ed. p. 29. See *Arcades*, l. 9.

466. "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts," *Psalm* li. 6.

468. Repeated with a slight variation in *P. L.* IX. 166—67:

"This essence to incarnate and imbrute,
That to the highth of deity aspired!"

Imbrute='grow brutish.'

470—75. Milton here adapts a well-known passage in the Phædo, 81, which it will be best to reproduce in Professor Jowett's version:

"But the soul which has been polluted, and is impure at the time of her departure, and is the companion and servant of the body always, and is in love with and fascinated by the body.....do you suppose that such a soul will depart pure and unalloyed?

That is impossible, he replied.

She is engrossed by the corporeal, which the continual association and constant care of the body have made natural to her.

Very true.

And this, my friend, may be conceived to be that heavy, weighty, earthy element of sight by which such a soul is depressed and dragged down again into the visible world, because she is afraid of the invisible and of the world below—prowling about tombs and sepulchres, in the neighbourhood of which, as they tell us, are seen certain ghostly apparitions of souls, which have not departed pure, but are cloyed with sight and therefore visible." *Dialogues of Plato*, vol. I. p. 429.

In his note on this passage (which exemplifies the Platonic practice mentioned above, 450—53), Geddes quotes a parallel Rabbinical superstition, to the effect that "*tribus diebus anima vagatur circa sepulchrum, expectans ut redeat in corpus. Cum vero videt quod immutatur aspectus faciei recedit et relinquit.*" It was, no doubt, some vague belief in the continued association of body and soul after death, and the durability of the former, that led to the yearly offering of meat and drink, and even clothes, at tombs—*Thucydides*, III. 58. Many popular superstitions as to the attachment which the soul feels for its corporeal tenement might be instanced; e.g. the old Bohemian idea that the *anima* of a dead man took the form of a bird and perched upon a tree near to the spot where the body was being burnt. When the latter was consumed the soul flitted away.

470. *Gloomy shadows.* Plato's phrase is ψυχῶν σκιοειδῆ φαντάσματα.

471. i.e. περὶ τὰ μνήματά τε καὶ τοὺς τάφους κυλινδουμένη, as Plato says of the soul.

Sepulchres. Milton, like Shakespeare, accentuates the noun *sepulchre* on the first syllable: the verb, on the penultimate. Cf. *Samson Agonistes*, 102:

"Myself my sépulchre, a moving grave;"

and the *Epitaph on Shakespeare*, 15:

"And, so sepúlchred, in such pomp dost lie."

473. *It.* We might have expected *they*, "gloomy shadows" being the subject of the sentence.

474. *Sensualty.* Both editions—1645 and 1673—print *sensually*, and the metre requires it. Some editors wrongly change to *sensuality*.

476. *How charming....* Later in life Milton thought otherwise; cf. *S. A.* 300—307 and *P. R.* IV. 285 et seq.

Charming. In the ordinary modern acceptation, 'delightful,' 'lovely.' But this use is rare in early English. *Charm* in Shakespeare nearly always implies 'working with a charm or spell.'

477. Cf. Berowne's description of love in *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV. 3. 339—340:

> "Subtle as Sphinx; as sweet and musical
> As bright Apollo's lute."

There is a certain humour in taking Shakespeare's phrase and transferring it to philosophy. The editors have noticed that Milton uses very similar language in a passage in the *Tractate of Education* addressed to Samuel Hartlib, 1644: "I shall not detain you longer in the demonstration of what we should not do, but straight conduct you to a hill-side, where I will point you out the right path of a virtuous and noble education, laborious indeed at the first ascent, but also so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospect and melodious sounds, that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming."

479. *Nectared.* 'Fragrant as nectar;' see 838.

480. *Crude*, i.e. undigested, a common meaning of *crudus;* cf. Juvenal's *crudum pavonem in balnea portas*, *Sat.* I. 143. The epithet (which Shakespeare never uses) occurs several times in Milton, usually with the Latin notion of 'rawness' or 'unripeness.' Cf. *Lyc.* 3, "berries harsh and crude," i.e. unripe; *S. A.* 700, "crude old age," i.e. premature because not ripe; *P. L.* VI. 511: "The originals of Nature in their crude conception;" where the sense is 'raw,' 'unworked.'

Surfeit: O. F. *surfait* or *sorfait*, 'excess;' strictly the past participle of *sorfaire*='to exaggerate,' i.e. *super-facere.* Proverbial wisdom said "surfeit is the father of much fast," *Measure for M.* I. 2. 130.

483. *Night-foundered.* 'Overtaken by,' or 'plunged in, night;' used again in *P. L.* I. 204:

> "The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff."

Foundered; the past part. of O. E. *foundren* 'to founder, also to cause to sink,' *Mayhew and Skeat*, s. v. Cf. O. F. *fondrer* 'to fall,' now not used as a simple verb, but extant in the compound *effondrer*='to *sink down;*' from L. *fundus.*

486. *Again, again!* i.e. the shout.

489. Cf. the sentiment of the king in 2 *Henry VI.* III. 2. 233:

"Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just."

490. *That hallo I should know. What are you? speak.* We might have expected this to be said by the Attendant Spirit. "*That* hallo" looks like a reference to "I'll hallo" in 487. Probably what happened was this: the elder brother called out, 487, and the Spirit answered. His reply is marked in the stage-direction of Lawes' edition, 1637, which runs thus: "He hallos; the Guardian Dæmon hallos again, and enters in the habit of a shepherd." In line 490, therefore, "that" refers to the answer given by Thyrsis before he actually appears on the stage.

491. i.e. they present their swords.

494. *Thyrsis.* The traditional shepherd name as far back as Theocritus; cf. the first *Idyl*, and Vergil's seventh *Eclogue*. In the *Epitaphium Damonis*, 4, Milton speaks of himself under that title:

Quas miser effudit voces, quæ murmura Thyrsis.

Matthew Arnold's monody on Clough lent the word new life and associations.

The lines, 494—496, are an intentional compliment to Lawes. Johnson hypercritically complains that they delay the action of the piece; but an interlude of three verses is not a very serious matter. Cf. 84, 85.

495—512. Note that there follow here 18 lines of rhymed heroics. Why, for once, does Milton abandon blank verse? Probably the answer is to be found in Masson's explanation, viz. that having mentioned the word *madrigal* in 495 Milton wished to carry on for a moment the idea of pastoral poetry which *madrigal* suggests. The heroic couplet had been largely dedicated to the services of pastoral verse; e.g. in a considerable portion of the *Shepheards Calender*, an example of extreme pastoralism. Ben Jonson in the *Sad Shepherd* gives us the same combination of blank verse, rhymed decasyllables, and periodic lyrics.

495. *Huddling;* because the waters stop in their course to listen: the picture suggested by Horace's *densum humeris bibit aure vulgus.*

Madrigal. Italian *madrigale*, a pastoral song. From *μάνδρα*, which has three meanings: (i) an enclosed space; (ii) a fold, stable—cf. *Theocritus* IV. 61; (iii) a Monastery, whence *archimandrite*. Although the correct etymology was given by Ménage, Dr Burney supposed that *madrigal* was derived from *Alla Madre*, "the first words of certain

short hymns addressed to the Virgin." The verse is an obvious allusion to the Orpheus legend; cf. *L' Al.* 145—150; *Il Pen.* 105—108; and the lines *Ad Patrem*, 52—55:

Silvestres decet iste choros, non Orphea, cantus
Qui tenuit fluvios et quercubus addidit aures.

Milton of course knew Horace's

Orphea
Arte materna rapidos morantem
Fluminum lapsus. *Odes* I. 12. 6—8;

and other passages to the same effect. Cf. too *Lyc.* 42—44.

499. *Wether.* Properly *wether* means 'a yearling,' from the base seen in Gk. ἔτος. Cf. Gothic *withrus*='a lamb.'

500. *Sequestered.* Milton uses the verb intransitively in the *Areopagitica*, Hales' ed. p. 25: "To sequester out of the world into Atlantick and Eutopian polities, which can never be drawn into use, will not mend our condition." Shakespeare in *Titus Andronicus*, II. 3. 75 (if indeed Shakespeare should be held responsible for that play) seems to lay the stress on the first syllable:

"Why are you séquester'd from all your train?"

French *séquestrer* (L. *sequestrare*)='lay aside;' hence the idea of 'remoteness' in *sequestered*='withdrawn,' 'retired.'

501. *Next.* 'Dearest.' So *nearest* (less frequently *next*) in Shakespeare.

502. *Toy.* 'Trifle.' A very common meaning in Shakespeare; e.g. *Lucrece* 214, "Or sells eternity to get a toy." For derivation cf. German *zeug*='stuff,' 'trash;' as in compounds, e.g. *Spielzeug*='playthings.' A good example of Grimm's law.

506. *To.* 'Compared to;' "Hyperion to a satyr."—*Hamlet*, I. 2. 140.

507. Strictly the question is unnecessary. Thyrsis knew that the lady was in the power of Comus; lines 571—78. But the enquiry leads up to the explanation that follows.

508. *How chance.* i.e. how happens it? A Shakespearian use: "How chance the roses there do fade so fast?"—*Midsummer N. D.* I. 1. 129. It is a blending of two constructions: (i) 'How does it chance that she is not in your company?' (ii) 'by what chance is she not?' In (i) *chance* is a verb: in (ii) *by what chance* is equivalent to an adverb. See Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar*, p. 37.

509. *Sadly.* 'Seriously;' cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, I. 1. 207: "But sadly tell me, who." So *sad* often = 'serious;' e.g. in *As You Like It*, III. 2. 156: "Sad brow and sober maid." See l. 189.

Without blame; i.e. without blame to us.

511—12. Observe the rhyme, *true* and *shew*. It proves that the pronunciation of the latter must have entirely changed. Cf. 993—996; and Sonnet II.:

> "How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
> Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year!
> My hasting days fly on with full career,
> But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th."

513. *Fabulous*, i.e. mere matter of legend, *fabula*. The *Spectator* had no sympathy with the man to whom "the appearance of spirits (seemed) fabulous and groundless," essay on *Ghosts and Apparitions*. Hence the common modern acceptation 'excessive,' 'incredibly great.'

515. Repeated in *P. L.* III. 19:

> "I sung of Chaos and eternal Night,
> Taught by the Heavenly Muse."

This claim to direct inspiration is common with the Elizabethan poets. Milton is so great, and so justly conscious of his greatness, that coming from him the words have no trace of boastful egotism. Among the 'sage poets' would be Homer and Vergil, Tasso and Spenser.

516. *Storied.* 'Narrated.' Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 1013, 1014:

> "Tells him of trophies, statues, tombs, and stories
> His victories, his triumphs, and his glories."

Storied in *Il Pen.* 159 and Gray's *Elegy* 40, = 'figured or painted with stories.' In this sense it has become a favourite epithet with poets: cf. Landor's *Count Julian*, II. 1:

> "Storied tapestry
> Swells its rich arch for him triumphantly;"

and Tennyson's *Ode to Memory* v.:

> "Where sweetest sunlight falls
> Upon the storied walls."

517. Cf. *P. L.* II. 628:

> "Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimæras dire."

Milton's poetry is curiously full of these verbal echoes, partly because

he so often employs traditional epithets, taken straight from the classics. For the Chimæra cf. *Iliad* VI. 181: πρόσθε λέων, ὄπιθεν δὲ δράκων, μέσση δὲ χίμαιρα.

Enchanted isles. Referring, we can scarcely doubt, to the "Wandring Islands" of the *Faerie Queene*, II. 12. 11 et seq. Spenser in turn followed Tasso's account of the isle of Armida. Belief in the existence of these places of mystery was evidently common; Hakluyt, describing the *Insulæ fortunæ*, says: "About these islands are certain flitting islands, which have been oftentimes seen; and when men approached near them, they vanished...and, therefore, it should seem he is not yet born, to whom God hath appointed the finding of them."

518. *Rifted.* This may be the pp. of *rive* or *rift*. Both verbs were in use. For the latter cf. *Winter's Tale*, V. 1. 66:

"Your ears
Should rift to hear me."

Rift (spelt *ryft*) occurs in Palsgrave's *Lesclarcissement*, 1530 (Skeat).

519. *There be.* Morris says: "The root *be* was conjugated in the present tense, singular and plural, as late as Milton's time," *Outlines*, p. 182. Cf. *P. L.* I. 84, "if thou beest he." This particular phrase occurs very often in Shakespeare, e.g. *Tempest*, V. 134,

"If thou beest Prospero,
Give us particulars."

In Old English it would have been written *beost*. But the singular was less common than the plural. We find the latter many times in Shakespeare and the Authorised Version: e.g. *Genesis* xlii. 32, "We be twelve brethren;" *Matthew* xv. 14, "They be blind leaders of the blind." Morris quotes, too, an example from *Childe Harold;* that poem however does not represent our modern idiom because the earlier cantos at least were an obvious imitation of Spenser's style. As showing that *be=are* was on the wane even in Milton's day Earle notes that in the revision of the Common Prayer-Book in 1661, *are* was substituted for *be* in forty-three places, the latter being left in only one, viz. *The Catechism*, "which be they?" Even in the subjunctive *be* scarcely holds its ground, and all the inflexions are lost. From the Sanskrit root *bhú* to which we owe φύειν, *fui*, *fore*, French *fus*, *fusse*.

520. *Navel.* 'Centre;' cf. use of ὀμφαλος and umbilicus. Six

Thomas More placed the chief town of his island of Utopia *tanquam in umbilico terræ*, rendered by the translator "just in the middes of the ilande," Pitt Press ed., p. 69. Cf. Shakespeare's "Even when the navel of the state was touched," *Coriolanus*, III. 1. 122. Byron coined a participle:

"Nemi navelled in the woody hills."
Childe Harold, IV. 173.

526. *Murmurs*, i.e. incantations spoken over the potion as it was being brewed. For *murmur*='spell' cf. *Arcades*, 60, "murmurs made to bless." The editors remind us of Statius, *Thebais*, IX. 732, 3:

Cantusque sacros et conscia miscet
Murmura.

An equally pointed reference would be *Macbeth* IV. 1, with the refrain of the witches,

"Double, double toil and trouble."

529. *Reason* in Milton is the chief faculty of the soul. Cf. *P. L.* V. 100—2:

"But know, that in the soul
Are many lesser faculties that serve
Reason as chief."

In *P. L.* XII. 97 he identifies it with virtue—"virtue, which is reason;" in III. 108, with freewill—"reason also is choice." Reason in fact for Milton is an embodiment of those higher qualities of intellect and emotion which separate men from the brute creation.

530. *Charactered.* 'Stamped;' a continuation of the metaphor in *unmoulding* (i.e. breaking up the pattern) and *mintage*. We may note the accentuation, *chárácters*; cf. *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, II. 7. 3—4:

"The table wherein all my thoughts
Are visibly charácter'd and engrav'd."

Shakespeare accents the verb indifferently on the first or second syllable, according as the metre requires; the substantive is always *chárácter*, save only in *Richard III.* III. 1. 81. For a good instance of *character* preserving its etymological sense 'image' (χαρακτήρ) cf. *Faerie Queene*, V. 6. 2:

"Whose character in th' Adamantine mould
Of his true hart so firmely was engraved."

531. *Crofts.* In Johnson's definition a croft is: "A little close adjoining to a house, and used for corn or pasture." Landor illustrates its meaning:

> "Where the hoof of Moorish horse laid waste
> His narrow croft and winter garden-plot."
> *Count Julian*, v. 4.

Skeat compares Old Dutch *crocht*, 'a field on the downs,' *Middle E. Dict.* s. v.

532. *Brow*, i.e. that slope down to the valley.

533. *Monstrous rout.* 'Herd of monsters;' an instance of the adjective doing the duty of the first part of a compound noun; cf. *Lyc.* 158. *Monster-rout* would sound awkward. German has a distinct advantage over English in this respect. Much valuable information upon the free use of the adjective in seventeenth century English is given in Schmidt's *Shakespeare Lexicon*, pp. 1415, 1416.

534. Alluding to the description of the island of Circe at the beginning of the seventh book of the *Æneid*. Perhaps *stabled*='which have got inside the sheep-folds,' and, as we know from Vergil, *Eclogue* III. 80, *triste lupus stabulis*. This interpretation, however, is a little forced, and Milton may only have meant 'wolves in their haunts;' cf. *P. L.* XI. 750—2:

> " Palaces,
> Where luxury late reigned, sea-monsters whelped,
> And stabled;"

i.e. had their lairs.

535. *Doing abhorred rites to Hecate.* Like Simætha in the second *Idyl* of Theocritus: "I will bewitch him with my enchantments. Do thou Selene shine clear and fair, for softly, Goddess, to thee will I sing and to Hecate of hell. Hail! awful Hecate! to the end be thou of our company, and make this medicine of mine not weaker than the spells of Circe," Lang's version. The goddess is solemnly invoked in Ben Jonson's *Masque of Queens:*

> "And thou, three-formed Star, that on these nights
> Art only powerful, to whose triple name
> Thus we incline, once twice and thrice the same;
> If now, with rites profane enough,
> We do invoke thee;"

where the footnote (by Ben Jonson himself) explains: "Hecate, who

is called Trivia or Triformis, of whom Virgil, *Æneid* lib. 4. She was believed to govern in witchcraft; and is remembered in all these invocations." Cf. the formula of conjuration in Chapman's *Bussy d'Ambois*, IV. 1, *veni, per noctis & tenebrarum abdita profundissima; per ipsos motus horarum, Hecatesque.* For a previous reference in *Comus* see l. 135.

Doing rites may have been intended as a translation of *sacra facere*, or ἱερὰ ῥέζειν.

538. *Inveigle* has a modern ring; but Shakespeare uses it once, *Troilus* II. 3. 99; also Spenser, *F. Q.* I. 12. 32. Pronunciation varies between *inveegle* and *invaygle*. Sir Thomas Browne probably preferred the latter; he spelt the word *enveagle*, and *ea* usually had the sound of *ay*. Cf. the *Religio Medici*, fol. 1686, p. 4: "these Opinions I never maintained...or endeavoured to enveagle any man's belief." See Earle, *English Tongue*, p. 176. Possibly from *aveugler*='to blind,' itself derived from Lat. *ab* and *oculus*.

539. *Unweeting*. Milton always writes *unweeting*, not *unwitting*: e.g. *Death of a Fair Infant* 23, 24:

> "For so Apollo, with unweeting hand,
> Whilom did slay his dearly-lovèd mate."

He could point to the same spelling in Spenser, *Faerie Queene* I. 3. 6:

> "As he her wronged innocence did weet."

This double *e* was due to the desire to retain the full sound of the long Saxon *i*. The latter had dropped out. Professor Earle, p. 119, knows of but "one well-attested example of its complete survival both in the character and in the sound, and that is in the name *Ide* of a village near Exeter, a name documentarily extant in a writing of the eleventh century;" and now, as then, pronounced *Eade*. When the sound survived the spelling changed; e.g. *fleece* for A. S. *flîs;* but often the sound altered to *igh* or *eye*, as in *life* for A. S. *lîf* (=*leeve*). From a root *wid* are derived ἰδεῖν and *videri*, with their cognates, on the side of the classical languages, and in the Teutonic group German *wissen*, English *wit*, and allied words.

540. *By then*. 'By the time that.' Cf. Shakespeare's *by this*= 'by this time;' "And I do know, by this they stay for me."—*Julius Cæsar* I. 3. 125.

542. *Knot-grass*. There is a stock joke in the dramatists that short people have eaten knotgrass, whose special property it was to

stop growth. "Say they should put him into a straight pair of gaskins, 'twere worse than knot-grass; he would never grow after it."—Beaumont and Fletcher, *Knight of the Burning Pestle* II. 2. Shakespeare's epithet is "hindering."—*Midsummer N. D.* III. 2. 329.

546. *Melancholy.* Not gloomy dejection, but the mood of seriousness or reflection celebrated in *Il Penseroso;* what Gray in one of his letters calls "white Melancholy, or rather *Leucocholy*" (*Works*, Gosse's ed. II. 114).

547. *Meditate my rural minstrelsy.* In simpler language, 'play on my shepherd's pipe.' Milton's second edition (1673) made the unnecessary addition *upon*, which gives a different turn to the sense. Cf. *Lycidas* 66:

"And strictly meditate the thankless Muse."

An obvious Latinism; being, in fact, Vergil's

Silvestrem tenui musam meditaris avena,

Eclogue I. 2. So *Eclogue* VI. 8. Cf. the use of μελετᾶν.

548. *Ere a close;* i.e. before there came a close; *ere* being a preposition. *Close* has its musical sense, 'cadence.' Cf. *Richard II.* II. 1. 12:

"The setting sun, and music at the close,
As the last taste of sweets, is sweetest last."

So in an old play *Lingua*, I. 1:

"For though (perchance) the first strains pleasing are,
I dare engage the close mine ears will jar"—
Dodsley's *Old Plays*, IX. 338.

There is also the technical expression *half-close*. A musician himself, Milton draws largely on the terminology of his favourite art. Cf. line 243, with note, and the *Nativity Ode*, 100. Milton, as we have seen, is the poet of great culture, and this culture supplies him with a variety of illustrations.

549. *Was up.* 'Had begun.' Frequent in Shakespeare; e.g. *Julius Cæsar* V. 1. 68: "The storm is up, and all is on the hazard." The 'Hunt's up' was the title of an old ballad-tune, referred to in *Romeo and Juliet* III. 5. 34, and *Titus Andronicus* II. 2. 1.

551. *Listened them.* Cf. *Much Ado* III. 1. 11—12:

"There will she hide her,
To listen our purpose"

(i.e. conversation, Fr. propos); where the later folios needlessly insert to.

As a rule, however, Shakespeare has *list* more often than *listen* with an accusative, e.g. *Lear* v. 3. 181, "List a brief tale."

552. *An unusual stop*, i.e. at line 145, where Comus bade his followers "break off."

553. *Drowsy-flighted steeds.* I have followed (with some hesitation) Professor Masson's example and retained what is practically the reading of the *Cambridge MS.* The latter gives *drowsy flighted*, i.e. two words unhyphened. All three early editions—that of Lawes, 1637, and those of Milton, 1645 and 1673—read *drowsie frighted*, i.e. again separate words without hyphen. This must mean, 'the drowsy steeds of night which had been frighted by the noise of Comus and his crew.' It certainly has the weight of authority on its side; but it seems to me lame and impotent compared with *drowsy-flighted*, removing from the passage half of the picturesqueness suggested by the Cambridge text. I am fain to believe that the latter is correct, and that *drowsy frighted* was an error on the part of Lawes which escaped the notice of Milton. Indirect, but strong, evidence in favour of the text here adopted is furnished by the passage in 2 *Henry VI.* IV. 1. 3—6, which Milton must have had in his mind's eye:

> "And now loud-howling wolves arouse the jades
> That drag the tragic melancholy night;
> Who with their drowsy, slow and flagging wings
> Clip dead men's graves."

We have, surely, in the third line of this quotation the germ of *drowsy-flighted* (for Milton was never ashamed to borrow from Shakespeare, "dear son of memory, great heir of fame"), and it appears most improbable that he should have changed the line so manifestly for the worse. It may be added that some editors keep the text of the early editions, but explain *frighted* to signify *freighted*. They print *drowsy-frighted*—the insertion of the hyphen amounts to little, as printers were careless about such details—and interpret 'the steeds of night heavy with sleep.' For the same picture of the chariot of the dusk cf. the Latin poem *In Quintum Novembris* 69, 70, and the *Nativity Ode* 236.

554. *Close-curtained Sleep.* We cannot help remembering Macbeth's "curtained sleep," II. 1. 51; and Juliet's "Spread thy close curtain, night," *Romeo and Juliet* III. 2. 5, this last line occurring in a passage from which Milton has borrowed more than once. See note on l. 373. Spenser employs the same obvious imagery, *Faerie Queene* I. 4. 44.

555. *Solemn-breathing.* The epithet pleased Gray:

"Oh! sovereign of the willing soul,
Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs."
Progress of Poesy, I. 2.

Solemn implies 'religious;' as in Milton's own poem, *At a Solemn Music.*

556. *Steam.* The edition of 1673 spoils the metaphor by substituting *stream.* Todd quotes a beautiful parallel from Bacon's *Essays* (no. XLVI.): "Because the breath of flowers is farre sweeter in the aire, where it comes and goes like the warbling of music." Still closer, however, is Tennyson's:

"They find a music centred in a doleful song
Steaming up"— *The Lotos-Eaters.*

557—560. Warton found the 'conceit' unworthy of the poet: Milton evidently thought otherwise, as he practically repeated it in *P. L.* IV. 604:

"She (the nightingale) all night long her amorous descant sang:
Silence was pleased."

For the personification of Silence, cf. *Il Pen.* 55.

558. *Took.* 'Charmed,' 'laid under a spell.' *Take* is used by Shakespeare of the influence, especially the malignant influence, of supernatural powers. Cf. *Hamlet* I. 1. 162—3:

"The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes;"

and *Lear* II. 4. 165—6:

"Strike her young bones,
You taking airs, with lameness."

This, rather than 'taken prisoner,' is the metaphor here, as in Tennyson's *Dying Swan*, III.:

"The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul
Of that waste place."

Cf. the *Nativity Ode*, 98.

559—560. I.e. cease to exist, if she could always be displaced or banished in the same way. Cf. Sylvester, "Silence dislodged at the first word," Grosart's ed. I. p. 169.

560. *All ear.* Cf. Shakespeare's "purblinded Argus, all eyes and no sight," *Troilus and Cressida* I. 2. 31; *all* being an adverb.

562. *Under the ribs of Death.* A remarkably definite picture, in contrast with the conception of Death as a vague personification of horror in *P. L.* II. 666—673:

> "The other shape—
> If shape it might be called that shape had none
> Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb."

The description in our text is conventional. In some popular *Book of Emblems*, or the famous series of woodcuts entitled the *Dance of Death*—they were published at Lyons in 1538 and were long attributed to Holbein—Milton may have seen an allegorical representation of Death as a grim "bare-ribbed" skeleton. "Bare-ribbed" is the epithet applied to Death by Shakespeare in *King John* V. 2. 177. Realism of the same type is seen in *Lucrece* 1761:

> "Shows me a bare-boned death by time outworn."

565. *Amazed.* 'Confounded;' *amaze* in Shakesperian English has a much stronger sense than now. The latter part of the line recalls *Hamlet* I. 1. 44 (in the reading of the folios, the quartos printing *horrowes*): "it harrows me with fear and wonder."

568. *Lawns.* *Lawn*="a space of grass-covered ground, a glade" (Skeat); i.e. an open place clear of wood, like L. *saltus*. A graceful word, occurring often in Milton; e.g. *Lycidas* 25; *L'Al.* 71; *Il Pen.* 35; and elsewhere. The limited meaning, 'grassplot in a garden,' is modern. The earlier form was *laund;* the *d* dropped out. Probably from French *lande*, 'waste land,' itself the German *land*. The *au* was intended to represent the fuller sound of French *a*; cf. *chaunt*, the old spelling of *chant*, from *chanter*, *launch* from *lancer*, and other words—Earle, pp. 168, 169. *Lawn*='fine linen' (as worn by bishops) may be a peculiar use of the same noun "which was used in the sense of a vista through trees, and might hence be applied to a transparent covering"—Skeat, following Wedgwood. Skeat, however, is doubtful on the subject.

573. *Prevent*, i.e. anticipitate.

577. *Durst. Dare*, allied to θαρρεῖν, θαρσεῖν, may be classed with auxiliaries like *can—could, may—might*. Properly these verbs belong to the strong conjugation, since they form the preterite by vowel-change. But the preterite ceased to be used only as a past tense; *it acquired a present signification.* Thus "I durst not" may mean *either 'I dared not'* or 'I dare not.' When this happened the verb in *some cases followed* the tendency of strong verbs to drop into the weak

form and developed a weak preterite. Hence we get the two preterites of *dare*, viz. *durst* as past and present; *dared* for past alone.

585. *Period.* 'Sentence;' so possibly in *Lucrece* 565, and the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* II. 1. 122, "a pretty period;" but in each of these cases the sense, 'end,' 'conclusion,' which *period* so often bears in Shakespeare is feasible.

586. *For me*, i.e. as far as I am concerned.

588. In *P. L.* II. 910 "Chance governs all," subject only to the "high arbiter," Chaos.

591. I.e. that which mischief intended to be most harmful.

592. *Happy trial*, i.e. trial of happiness; or the adjective might have a proleptic force—'the trial which proves virtue happy.'

593. *Recoil.* Fr. *reculer*, whence the old spelling *recule:* cf. the *Utopia:* "For it is well knowen, that when theire owne army hathe reculed and in dyspayre turned backe.....then the priestes cumming betwene have stayed the murder," Pitt Press ed. p. 154.

594—597. Slowly separating from the good the evil element preys upon itself, just as the figure of Sin in *P. L.* II. 799—800 is gnawed by the whelps of her own womb.

595. *Scum.* Cf. German *schaum*='foam;' e.g. in *meer-schaum.* From the time of Shakespeare downwards the word has always had a bad sense. Meaning, properly the impurities that rise to the surface of liquids in boiling it naturally came to signify 'dross,' 'refuse.' To *skim* is to remove the *scum;* the vowel-change being regular, as in *fill* from *full.* A good many words that begin with the sound *sk* are of Scandinavian origin; see l. 620.

603. *Legions.* Scan as a trisyllable.

604. *Acheron.* Strictly the river of the lower world round which the shades hover, as in *P. L.* II. 578:

> "Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate;
> Sad Acheron, of sorrow, black and deep:"

then put for the lower world itself; cf. the use of *Stygian*, l. 132. From ἄχος, ῥέω.

607. *Purchase.* 'Booty;' cf. *Faerie Queene* VI. 11, 12:

> "the mayd of whom they spake
> Was his own purchas and his onely prize."

Schmidt finds the same sense in *Cymbeline* I. 4. 91: "If there were wealth enough for the purchase." From O. F. *purchacer*=to 'pursue

eagerly,' 'acquire;' i.e. *pur=pour*, and *chacer*='to hunt after.' The latter derives from *captare*.

608. In Ben Jonson's *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*, 1619, Comus has "his head crown'd with roses and other flowers, his hair curled." In Elizabethan and later times curling the hair was a mark of the utmost effeminacy and affectation; see *Lear* III. 4. 87.

611. *Stead.* 'Service;' not uncommon as a verb in Shakespeare; e.g. in *Merchant of Venice* I. 3. 7, "May you stead me?" i.e. can you help me? Cf. *bested* in *Il Pen.* 3 and 2 *Hen. VI.* II. 3. 56.

612. *Other*, i.e. mightier. For the emphatic repetition, *other... other*, cf. *Lyc.* 174, and the *Canzone* (ll. 7, 8) among Milton's Italian poems.

614, 615. A certain resemblance is traceable to Prospero's speech to Ariel at the end of the fourth act of *The Tempest*, 259—260.

614. The wand is the usual symbol of supernatural power. Comus may have inherited the περιμηκέης ῥάβδος of his mother Circe, *Odyssey* X. 293.

Unthread. A well-known Shakespearian *crux* is *King John* v. 4. 11, "Unthread the rude eye of rebellion." Shakespeare there (as in *Lear* II. 1. 120) quibbles on the idea of unthreading a needle, and perhaps we ought in the present line to press the metaphor.

617. *Relation*, i.e. report; cf. *The Tempest* v. 164:

"For 'tis a chronicle of day by day,
Not a relation for a breakfast."

The verb, *relate*, preserves this sense; the noun has lost it. *Relation* in modern E.='reference,' 'connection,' reproducing *refero* in its secondary meaning 'concern' (*refert*). The French, *relation*, retains both senses.

617. *Shifts.* Usually *shift*='stratagem,' 'contrivance.' Here the sense required is 'reflection.'

619—628. Probably a reference to Milton's school-friend Diodati, whose premature death in 1638 inspired the *Epitaphium Damonis*. Lines 150—154 of that poem mention Diodati's knowledge of botany and habit of imparting it to Milton:

"'Tu mihi percurres medicos, tua gramina, succos,
Helleborumque humilesque crocos foliumque hyacinthi,
Quasque habet ista palus herbas artesque medentum.'
Ah pereant herbæ, pereant artesque medentum,
Gramina postquam ipsi nil profecere magistro."

Among Milton's *Epistolæ Familiares* are two letters addressed to

Diodati; they were written in September 1637, when the latter was settled as a doctor in the north of England. In the second occurs a passage which illustrates our text and which Mr Jerram in his note on the above-quoted verses of the *Epitaphium* renders thus: "You wish me good health six hundred times, which is as much as I can desire, or even more. Surely you must lately have been appointed the very steward of Health's larder, so lavishly do you dispense all her Stores, or at least Health should now certainly be your parasite, since you so lord it over her and command her to attend your bidding." Diodati must, I think, be the "shepherd lad" of *Comus*.

620. *To see to.* An obsolete expression='to behold;' cf. *Ezekiel* xxiii. 15: "girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look to," and *Joshua* xxii. 10.

Skilled, i.e. versed in the lore of; cf. *P. L.* IX. 42:

"Of these
Nor skilled, nor studious."

Skill, which in modern English is almost confined to the idea 'dexterity' (especially of hand), had a much wider meaning for Shakespeare and Milton. Among the synonyms of it given and illustrated by quotation in Schmidt's *Shakespeare Lexicon* are 'discernment,' 'sagacity,' 'mental power,' 'knowledge of any art.' The *sk* points to Scandinavian origin (cf. note on *scum*, 595), and the base of the word is the root *skar*='cut.' Hence the underlying notion is 'separation,' 'drawing distinctions.'

621. *Virtuous*, i.e. possessed of medicinal properties; cf. *Il Pen.* 113, "the virtuous ring and glass." So Shakespeare:

"Culling from every flower
The virtuous sweets." 2 *Henry IV.* IV. 5. 76.

Cf. *virtue*, l. 165, and *P. L.* IV. 198,

"on the virtue thought
Of that life-giving plant."

626. *Scrip.* "Orig. sense 'scrap,' because made of a scrap of stuff," Skeat. A number of words can be traced back to the root *skarp* 'cut,' an extension of *skar*, as above; cf. *scarf*, properly a 'shred:' the generic idea being 'cut small' or 'cut sharp.' *Scrip* is familiar to us from at least one passage: "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything?" *Luke* xxii. 35. *Scrip* ='a writing' explains itself—*scriptum*, O. F. *escript*.

627. *Simples.* A *simple* was a single (i.e. *simple*) ingredient as a *compound*, especially in a compounded medicine. Its association with medicine led to the common meaning, 'medicinal herb;' once no

doubt in current use, as it occurs so often in Shakespeare—"culling of simples," *Romeo and Juliet* v. 1. 40.

630—633. In point of style this passage, with its accumulation of *buts*, seems the most awkward in *Comus*.

634. *Like*, i.e. correspondingly: 'as unknown, so unesteemed.'

635. *Clouted*. It is tempting to connect with French *clou*, 'a nail;' we must, however, look for the origin of *clouted* in A. S. *clút*, a 'patch,' and Middle E. *clouten* 'to mend;' cf. Latimer's *Sermons*, "he should not have clouting leather to piece his shoes with." The phrase, "clouted shoon," was hackneyed; see the various references quoted by the editors on 2 *Henry VI.* IV. 3. 195, and compare *Joshua* ix. 5, "Old shoes and clouted upon their feet."

636. *Medicinal*. Scan *medcinal*, as in *S. A.* 627:

"No cooling herb
Or medicinal liquor can asswage;"

and cf. the modern tendency to abbreviate *medicine* to *med'cine*.

636, 637. Referring to *Odyssey* X. 281—306; see in particular 302—306: "Therewith the slayer of Argos gave me the plant that he had plucked from the ground, and he showed me the growth thereof. It was black at the root, but the flower was like to milk. Moly the gods call it, but it is hard for mortal men to dig; howbeit with the gods all things are possible" (Butcher and Lang). Moly is the flower of ideal lands. Tennyson's Lotos-eaters lie

"Propt on beds of amaranth and moly;"

and Shelley associates the same plants in *Prometheus Unbound*, II. 4:

"folded Elysian flowers,
Nepenthe, Moly, Amaranth, fadeless blooms."

Spenser remembered that the root was black, *Sonnet* XXVI. For the same allusion elsewhere in Milton, cf. the first *Elegy*, 87, 88:

Et vitare procul malefidæ infamia Circes
Atria, divini Molyos usus ope.

637. *Wise Ulysses*. Homer's πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς. Tennyson makes him the "gray spirit yearning in desire to follow knowledge."—*Ulysses*.

638. *He called it Hæmony*. The name is Milton's invention, and not entirely intelligible. It has been suggested that he intended *Hæmony* as a reference to *Hæmonia*, an old name of Thessaly, the land of magic. Certainly Thessaly, or Hæmonia, was the home of mystery and incantations: cf. Horace's

Quæ saga, quis te solvere Thessalis
Magus venenis, quis poterit deus?
Odes, I. xxvii. 21, 22;

and Tibullus, 2. 4. 56.

639. *Sovran.* For the form cf. l. 41. In Shakespeare the epithet often bears, as here, the sense "medicinal and efficacious" (Schmidt). Cf. *Sonnet* 153, 8, "Against strange maladies a sovereign cure." So Fletcher in the *Faithful Shepherdess*, v. 5:

"Satyr, bring him to the bower;
We will try the sovereign power
Of other waters."

641. *Furies'*; i.e. evil fairies; see note on 436 and cf. *Hamlet* I. 1. 163.

642. Varied in *Lyc.* 116, "Of other care they little reckoning make." *Reckoning*='heed:' 'make little account of it;' cf. note on l. 404.

644—647. Warton points out that it was a recognised expedient in mediæval tales for a warrior of the type of the Red Crosse Knight to carry a charm, often a herb, as a protective against evil influences.

650, 651. Not improbably an echo of *Odyssey* X. 294, 295, where Hermes says, "when it shall be that Circe smites thee with her long wand, then draw thou thy sharp sword from thy thigh, and spring on her, as one eager to slay her;" Odysseus remembers the instructions, 321, 322. Ovid has a parallel passage, *Metamorphoses* XIII. 293:

Conantem virga mulcere capillos
Reppulit, et stricto pavidam deterruit ense.

651, 652. Precisely what Guyon did in the second book of the *Faerie Queene*, canto 12. The sorceress Acrasia prepared the cup (56); it was her custom to present wine to passers by:

"So she to Guyon offred it to tast,
Who, taking it out of her tender hond,
The cup to ground did violently cast,
That all in peeces it was broken fond,
And with the liquor stained all the lond."

Stanza 57.

Milton's indebtedness to Spenser has been noted. See *Introduction*, p. xxxviii.

653. *Seize his wand.* Which the brothers fail to do. The wand is *the sign of power*, as in l. 614.

Curst crew. Cf. *P. L.* VI. 806. In his epics Milton repeatedly applies *crew* to Satan's rebellious angels.

655. *Vomit smoke.* Cf. *Æneid* VIII. 252, 3:

Faucibus ingentem fumum, mirabile dictu,
Evomit;

where the subject is Cacus, a son of Vulcan.

The Scene changes. Probably a screen, in technical language a *traverse* or *travers*, was put forward while the alteration of the scene was being effected. Cf. Nares' *Glossary* s.v. *travers:* "At the approach of the countesse into the greate chamber, the hoboyes played untill the roome was marshaled, which once ordered, a *travers* slided away;" and Ben Jonson's *Entertainment at Theobalds*, 1607, "The King and Queen, being entered into the gallery, after dinner there was seen nothing but a *traverse* of white across the room: which suddenly drawn, was discovered a gloomy obscure place."

Soft Music. Omitted in the *Cambridge MS.* Doubtless the addition of music was due to Lawes. The idea of tempting by means of a banquet (cf. *The Tempest* III. 3) meets us in mediæval romances of virtue assailed by evil powers.

Enchanted chair. Enchanted because "smeared with gums of glutinous heat," l. 917.

Puts by. 'Refuses.' So Cæsar rejected the crown:

"*Bru.* Was the crown offer'd him thrice?
Casca. Ay, marry was't, and he put it by twice."
Julius Cæsar I. 2. 221.

Goes about. 'Tries.' Shakespeare often uses 'go about'='to take trouble' in a bad sense; e.g. in *Measure for Measure* III. 2. 215, "see how he goes about to abuse me."

659—813. Dramatically this is the most effective part of *Comus;* even Johnson found merit in the scene.

660. *Alabaster.* The two kinds of alabaster must be distinguished. The oriental or calcareous alabaster of the ancients was a carbonate of lime. Cases to hold unguents were made of it; cf. *St Matthew* xxvi. 7, "an alabaster box of very precious ointment." The mineral now known as alabaster is a sulphate of lime, and the pure white variety was much used in images and monuments. Hence the appropriateness of the reference to "statue;" cf. *Merchant of Venice* I. 1. 83, 84:

"Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?"

and "smooth as monumental alabaster" in *Othello* V. 2. 5. Stow

describing the cross in Cheapside (to which there is a possible allusion in *As You Like It* IV. I. 154—"Diana in the fountain") says: "There was then (1596) set up a curious wrought tabernacle of grey marble, and in the same an alabaster image of Diana." Coryat saw in one of the Libraries at Venice "a little world of memorable antiquities, in Alabaster," *Crudities*, vol. I. p. 224, ed. 1776. The statue of Lady Elizabeth Russell which Addison mentions, *Spectator*, no. 329, is of the same material. Milton has the word in two other passages, *P. L.* IV. 544 and *P. R.* IV. 548; it seems best to be consistent (with Masson) in printing in each case the correct form *alabaster*, although the spelling in 16th and 17th centuries is almost always *alablaster*. This may have been due to a confusion with *arblaster*, a bowman, also written *alablaster* (*New English Dict.*). *Arblaster* is from O. F. *arbaleste*, Lat. *arcubalista*. *Alabaster* is said to be derived from *Alabastron*, a town in Egypt.

661, 662. There should be a comma at *was*, the sentence being a rather awkward inversion = "root-bound, as was Daphne." The story of Daphne flying from Apollo and being changed into a laurel-tree at her own petition is told by Ovid, *Met.* I. 660 et seq.

663—665. Todd quotes the same sentiment from Cicero, *De Finibus* III.: *recte invictus, cujus etiam si corpus constringatur, animo tamen vincula injici nulla possunt.*

665. *While.* 'So long as.'

668. A reminiscence, perhaps, of *Isaiah* xxxvi. 10, "they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

672—675. The arrangement of the lines differs in the *Cambridge MS.* In the latter, lines 672—705 of the present text, which contain Comus' offer of the drink and its rejection by the lady, come in at what is now verse 755. That is, in the *Cambridge MS.* after the words "Brisk as the April buds in primrose season" Comus continues with the line "O foolishness of men." When he reaches the close of his speech, "Think what, and be advised; you are but young yet" (i.e. verse 755 as it stands in our text), he presents the cordial, and the words run: "Think what, and look upon this cordial julep." Then follows, as here, her refusal of the cup. The change in the order of the speeches involved the slight alteration of the text that occurs in verse 755; and the whole scene gains in point of variety.

672. *Julep.* Properly rose-water; then any bright drink; finally often used to signify a syrup medicine. The countryman in Henry Vaughan's *Praise of a Country Life* "knows not what is meant by *the apoplexie* or *the gout*; never saw a julep"—Grosart's Henry *Vaughan*, vol. III. p. 243. *Julep* is from the Persian wor

guláb, 'rose-water;' Persian *gul*='a rose:' *áb*='water.' See line 674, note.

673. *Flames and dances.* Cf. *S. A.* 543—6:

> "Nor did the dancing ruby,
> Sparkling outpoured, the flavour or the smell,
> Allure thee."

For *his*='its,' see l. 248.

674. *Syrups.* Like *julep*, of oriental origin. Arabic *sharáb*, *shuráb* ('wine,' 'beverage'), *sherbet*, *shrub* (a drink made with rum) and *syrup* are all from the same Arabic root='to drink.' We have a considerable number of Arabic and Persian words in English. Many have come straight into our language without any intermediate stage. Travellers have brought them back; trade has imported not a few; and by other channels they have reached us. Often, however, an oriental word has been first naturalised in France, and then passed over to England. The study in France during the 12th and 14th centuries of eastern philosophy and science enriched the French vocabulary with numerous technicalities; these technicalities being first employed in scientific mediæval Latin and thence finding their way into the French tongue. This is especially true of terms connected with (i) astronomy, (ii) alchemy, and (iii) mathematics. For (i) cf. *nadir;* for (ii) *élixir;* for (iii) *algèbre.* Again, many of the French Orientalisms were introduced from the Spanish peninsula. For instance, this word *syrup*, which we borrowed from the French, had been previously taken by the French from the Spanish, who in turn had conveyed it from the Arabs. Similarly *julep*, noticed above (673), passed from Persian to Spanish, thence to French, thence to English.

675, 676. *Nepenthes.* The draught that was

> " of soverayne grace,
> Devized by the Gods, for to asswage
> Harts grief," *Faerie Queene* IV. 3. 43.

Cf. Pope's line "Lull'd with the sweet nepenthe of a court," *Epilogue to the Satires.* For the classical allusion see *Odyssey* IV. 219—229, where Menelaus and Helen entertain Telemachus at Sparta; and "Helen, daughter of Zeus, presently cast a drug into the wine whereof they drank, a drug to lull all pain and anger, and bring forgetfulness of every sorrow. Whoso should drink a draught thereof, when it is mingled in the bowl, on that day he would let no tear fall down his cheeks, not though his father and mother died.....Medicines of such virtue

(*φάρμακα μητιόεντα*) had the daughter of Zeus, which Polydamna, the wife of Thon, had given her, a woman of Egypt" (Butcher and Lang). According to Merry this *φάρμακον* was explained by Plutarch to be merely the charm of Helen's eloquence; and in Forcellini we find *si Homeri latentem prudentiam altius scruteris, delenimentum illud quod Helena vino miscuit non herba fuit, non ex India succus, sed narrandi opportunitas, quæ hospitem mœroris oblitum ad gaudium flexit.* The connection between Egypt and magic is traditional; we see it presumably in the superstition which associated the gypsies with Egypt—*gypsy* being a corruption of *Egyptian*.

679. "Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel," Shakespeare, *Sonnet* I. 8. Cf. too Robynson's translation of the *Utopia:* "When nature biddeth the (i.e. thee) to be good and gentle to other she commaundeth the not to be cruell and ungentle to the selfe," Pitt Press ed. p. 107. Milton remembered the present line when he wrote *S. A.* 784.

680. *Which Nature lent.* As Shakespeare says:

> "Nature never lends
> The smallest scruple of her excellence,
> But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines
> Herself the glory of a creditor,
> Both thanks and use" (i.e. interest)—
> *Measure for Measure* I. 1. 36—40.

Cf. also his fourth *Sonnet*, 3: "Nature's bequest gives nothing, but doth lend." Nature, Shakespeare means, never gives anything to man for his absolute possession (cf. Lucretius' *vitaque mancipio nulli datur*, 3. 971), but always regards him as holding her presents on trust.

685. *Unexempt condition*, i.e. terms which should be strictly observed. Faerie Queene I, IX, 40, 8-9

686. *Mortal frailty*, i.e. weak human nature. *Frail* and *fragile* are doublets; similarly French *frêle* (O. F. *fraile*) and *fragile* from L. *fragilis*.

688. *That.* The antecedent must be "you" in l. 682.

689. *Timely*, i.e. early; so the adverb at 970. *Timely* always bears this sense in Shakespeare: e.g. *Comedy of Errors* I. 1. 139, "happy were I in my timely death." Now it implies 'come at the *right* time;' hence 'suitable.'

694. *Aspects.* 'Objects.' Probably to be scanned *aspécts*, as in *P. L.* VI. 450:

> "*His* words here ended, but his meek aspect
> Silent yet spake."

Cf. *contést* for *cóntest*, *P. L.* IV. 872; *contráry* for *cóntrary*, *S. A.* 972. In these cases the influence of the French accentuation has been at work. The instinct of the French is to bring the stress at the close of a word: we reverse the process. The study of accent in English is the study of a two-fold process—the decline of the French influence and the growth of the Teutonic practice. Chaucer has

aventúre for our *advénture*
fortúne ... *fórtune*
vertúe ... *vírtue*, etc.

The effect of French example is strongly marked in Spenser; and in Shakespeare (who always writes *aspéct*) and Milton we meet with instances, less numerous but still not infrequent, that point the same way. See Earle's *English Tongue*, pp. 154—56.

695. *Ugly-headed.* Printed *oughly-headed* in both Milton's editions, which Masson retains. Cotgrave has a similar form, "an ill-favoured scrubbe, a little *ouglie*, or swartie wretch," s. v. *Marpaut*, and in Earle's *Philology*, p. 384, an extract is given from Robert Crowley's *Epigrams* (1550), of which one couplet runs:

"Wyth terrible tearynge
A full *ouglye* syght."

The spelling therefore of the adjective was not definitely fixed, but it seems arbitrary to keep an obsolete form in a modernised text.

Ug-ly=Icelandic *ugg-ligr*, where *-ligr*=A. S. adjectival suffix *-líc*, 'like,' which in modern E. has become *ly*. The first half of *ug-ly* is from the base whence come a number of cognate words signifying 'terror;' e.g. Icel. *ugga* 'to fear,' A. S. *oga* 'fear,' modern E. *awe*.

Skeat notes that the number of Scandinavian words in English that end in *g* or *gg* is considerable, e.g. *flag* (in both senses), *log*, *snug*, *stag*, with others in which the *g* has been doubled, e.g. *muggy*, *swagger*; *Principles*, p. 470. Of course, the Scandinavian element in the English language is due to the Danish invasions and the Danish kings of England. The period when this Scandinavian influence was strongest was from 950—1050.

696. *Brewed enchantments*, i.e. the draught "with many murmurs mixed;" cf. *S. A.* 934, "Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms."

700. *Lickerish.* 'Dainty.' An apt illustration occurs in Giles Fletcher's *Christ's Victorie on Earth*, 18:

"For well that aged syre could tip his tongue,
And licke his rugged speech with phrases prime;"

i.e. make it palatable (Grosart's ed. p. 141). For etymology cf. French *lécher*, Germ. *Leckerei* (='dainties'), English *lick*. The central idea is 'to lick:' hence the notion of something that pleases the taste.

702, 703. Cf. Euripides, *Medea* 618, κακοῦ γὰρ ἀνδρὸς δῶρ' ὀνησιν οὐκ ἔχει; in the same way an enemy's gifts do not profit—ἐχθρῶν ἄδωρα δῶρα κοὐκ ὀνήσιμα, *Ajax* 665.

704. *Delicious.* A word as common in Milton as it is rare in Shakespeare. Milton, whose influence on Keats is very marked, may have been responsible for the latter's monotonous use of the epithet.

706—708. I.e. foolish are those who adopt the doctrines of Stoicism or Cynicism and practise rigid, morose abstinence. Such is the general purport of the lines. *Cynic tub* obviously refers to Diogenes; cf. "the churlish Cynicke in his Tub," Carew's *Cælum Britannicum*, Hazlitt's ed. p. 221. *Budge doctors* is not easy. There were two words *budge:* a substantive meaning 'fur': an adjective="surly, stiff, formal," *Johnson's Dictionary;* "solemn in demeanour, important-looking, pompous, stiff, formal," *New English Dictionary*. As to the former, Skeat says: "a kind of fur. *Budge* is lamb-skin with the wool dressed outwards: orig. simply 'skin'—F. *bouge*, a wallet, great pouch, Lat. *bulga*, a little bag, a word of Gaulish origin." He refers to the same root the word *budget*='a leathern bag' which occurs in *The Winter's Tale*, IV. 3. 20: i.e. F. *bougette* (which survives) diminutive of *bouge*, as above. But the *New English Dictionary* does not, apparently, adopt this explanation. It suggests a possible connection with O. F. *bouchet*, *bochet*, a kid, because Bullokar in the *Expositor* (1616) calls budge "a furre of a kinde of kid in other countries." This would be satisfactory did not Cotgrave and other writers treat it as lambskin. Cf. Cotgrave: "*Agneau, Blanche d'agneaux*, the furre called, white Lambe, or, white Budge." Perhaps it will be safest to remember Skeat's account and derive from *bouge*.

This fur, of whatever species, was much used. We know from Stow's *Survey* that Budge-Row (in the City, running out of Queen Victoria Street) was so called because most of the London furriers lived there. Budge was specially employed in the ornamentation of academic gowns. Todd quotes a Latin edict of 1414 regulating the academic dress of graduates and students of the University of Cambridge: those of the rank of Bachelor might wear only budge or lambskin (*tantum furruris budgeis aut agninis*) on their hoods. Cf. Milton's own tract, *Observations on the Articles of Peace*, "yet for want of stock enough in scripture-phrase to serve the necessary uses of their

malice, they are become so liberal, as to part freely with their own budge-gowns from off their backs, and bestow them on the magistrates as a rough garment to deceive;" where he is satirising the members of the Presbytery at Belfast. Finally, in the procession on Lord Mayor's day a certain company of "Budge-bachelors" took part, so-named from the dress they wore. It is probable, then, that in the present passage Milton meant learned men who in virtue of their university degrees could have gowns ornamented in a special fashion. He coined "budge doctor" on the analogy of "Budge-bachelor." He may also have intended his reader to remember the adjective *budge*. But this is not certain, because no other instance of the use of the word so early as 1634 is forthcoming. Dr Murray quotes Ellwood's *Autobiography*, 1715, "The warden was a budge old man;" and Oldham's *Art of Poetry*, 1686:

"No tutor, but the budge philosophers he knew."

Dr Murray dismisses the etymology of the adjective as unknown.

714. *Curious*. 'Dainty,' 'critical.' The two main meanings which *curious* bears in modern English, (i) 'strange,' 'odd,' (ii) 'inquisitive,' are not found in Shakespeare. He uses the adjective to signify (i) 'careful,' 'scrupulous:' e.g.,

"If my slight Muse do please these curious days,"
Sonnet 38, 13,

(ii) 'elegant:'. "lapped in a most curious mantle," *Cymbeline* v. 5. 361, (iii) 'embarrassing,' i.e. requiring *cura;* "fraught with curious business," *Winter's Tale* IV. 4. 525.

715, 16. An advance upon Vergil's theory:

Velleraque ut foliis depectant tenuia Seres, *G.* II. 121.

719. *Hutched*, i.e. enclosed. Fr. *huche*, 'hutch,' 'bin:' Low Lat. *hutica*. Cf. Du Cange: *est enim hutica, quod Belgæ nostri* Huche *vocant, cista major et longior*. He also gives *hucha, huchia*. The original root may be the same as in German *hüten*='to guard,' English *heed*. *Hutch* is now seen only in special combinations, e.g. *rabbit-hutch;* but once common. In the *Hampole Psalter* it is used of the ark of Israel; "rise lord...*thou* and *the* huche of *thi* halighynge," ed. Bramley, p. 450. "Archbishop Chichele gave a borrowing chest to the University of Oxford, which was called Chichele's Hutch," Warton. A *bolting-hutch* is the tub into which flour is sifted. "That bolting-hutch!" said Prince Hal of Falstaff, 1 Henry IV. II. 4. 495.

721. Cf. *Daniel* i. 12: "Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink."

722. *Frieze*, or *frize*, was coarse woollen cloth, made chiefly in Wales, as Shakespeare knew, *Merry Wives* v. 5. 146; originally, however, from Friesland, whence its name. The French called it *drap de frise*.

727. "If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, not sons," *Hebrews* xii. 8.

732. Shakespeare is fond of referring to the hidden jewels of the deep; cf. *Sonnet* 21. 6:

"With sun and moon, with earth and sea's rich gems."

So *Richard III.* I. 4. 26 and *Midsummer N. D.* III. 1. 161. Milton writes in *Naturam non pati Senium*, 63—65:

nec ditior olim
Terra sacrum sceleri celavit montibus aurum
Conscia, vel sub aquis gemmas.

734. *They below*, i.e. men on earth, οἱ κάτω.

737. *Coy* now implies mock-modesty. Formerly 'contemptuous,' 'disdainful,' was the ordinary sense; as perhaps here. Cotgrave has: "Mespriseresse: A coy, a squeamish or scornful dame." Shakespeare coins a verb *coy*='to disdain:' "if he coyed to hear Cominius speak" —*Coriolanus* v. 1. 16. From *quietus*, through French *coi*. Hence *coy* and *quiet* are doublets.

738. We are reminded of the long dissertation in *Measure for Measure*, I. 1. 121—179.

739—744. These lines contain an idea which had become a commonplace of poets, viz. that those who possess personal beauty should marry and through their children enable that beauty to remain in the world instead of dying out. The first seventeen of Shakespeare's Sonnets are a series of variations on this theme—an argument developed under different metaphors in favour of the marriage of the unknown "W. H." Shakespeare in Sonnets 4 and 6 employs almost the same imagery as Milton, viz. money lent out at interest. Cf. also *Venus and Adonis*, 163—174, and *Romeo and Juliet*, I. 1. 221—226. Outside Shakespeare parallels might be quoted from Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, I. 1; Drayton's *Legend of Matilda; Brittain's Ida*, II. 7. 8 (which Dr Grosart attributes to Phineas Fletcher, not Spenser); and other poems.

743, 744. Suggested perhaps by, certainly suggestive of, *Midsummer N. D.* I. 1. 77—79:

"But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies, in single blessedness."

Many incidental touches in Milton's early poems show that he was peculiarly familiar with this particular play. Sidney Walker pointed out that a curious parallel to Shakespeare's words occurs in the *Colloquies* of Erasmus: *ego rosam existimo feliciorem, quæ marescit in hominis manu, delectans interim et oculos et nares, quam quæ putrescit in frutice*, edn. 1693, p. 186. The rose is often taken as the type of purity. Giles Fletcher speaks of the "Virgin rose"—*Christ's Victorie on Earth*, Grosart's ed. p. 160.

745. *Nature's brag*, i.e. that of which nature boasts. The verb *brag* (a Celtic word) usually had, and now invariably has, a bad sense; but twice in *Romeo and Juliet*, I. 5. 69 and II. 6. 31, it means 'to be *justly* proud of;' cf. the former passage:

"And to say truth, Verona brags of him,
To be a virtuous and well-govern'd youth."

Beauty, Milton means, is a possession on which Nature has good reason to pride herself.

748. Much the same jingle as Shakespeare's

"Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits,"
The Two Gentlemen, I. 1. 2.

749. *Complexions*. Scan as four syllables. The termination *tion*, especially if preceded by *c* (and *complexion* is practically a case in point), is very frequently treated as two syllables at the end of a verse; rarely so in the middle of a line. See Abbott's *Shakesperian Grammar*, pp. 367, 368.

750. *Grain*, i.e. hue, colour; from O. F. *graine*, Lat. *granum*. *Granum* was the Low Latin equivalent for the classical word *coccum*. Properly *coccum* meant a 'berry;' but it was specially used of the cochineal insect found upon the scarlet oak in Spain and other Mediterranean countries; this insect being, from its shape, supposed to be a berry. From the cochineal insect a certain dye was made, called *coccum;* whence *coccinus*='red.' In Low Latin *granum* took the place of *coccum:* why, or when, is not known. Perhaps people thought that the insect resembled a corn-seed more than a berry. We find this sense of *granum* in all the dictionaries of mediæval Latin. Cf. Du Cange: "*Granum:* Coccum...*Anglice* grain;" Maigne d'Arnis: "Granum:

Coccum—Cochinelle;" and Forcellini: *Fructus quoque cocci, quo panni tinguntur*, granum *dicitur*. *Granum* passed into O. F. and thence into English; cf. Cotgrave "*Graine:* the seed of herbs, also grain wherewith cloth is dyed in grain, scarlet die;" and again s. v. *migraine:* "Scarlet, or purple in grain." Chaucer has *scarlet-en-grayn*.

Strictly, then, *grain* should mean a scarlet dye such as could be extracted from the cochineal insect, variously called *coccum* and *granum*. But by the time when Milton wrote the word must have lost something of its original sense. It was no longer limited to a scarlet shade; it signified any colour. Thus the wings of Raphael in *P. L.* v. 285 are "sky-tinctured grain," where the colour must be filled in according to the reader's sense of fitness. In *P. L.* xi. 241—3 the archangel bore

> "a military vest of purple...
> Livelier than Melibœan, or the grain
> Of Sarra."

Sarra was the old name for Tyre, so that "grain of Sarra"='Tyrian purple;' cf. *Sarrano dormiat auro, Georg.* II. 506. In *Il Pen.* 33 Melancholy wears "a robe of darkest grain;" and in *Lycidas*, in a passage afterwards much altered, viz. lines 142 et seq., the *Cambridge MS.* has:

> "And that sad floure that strove
> To write his own woes in the vermeil graine,"

where the reference is to the hyacinth. These passages show that *grain* was applied to any shade of colour. Hence "cheeks of sorry grain"='cheeks of an unprepossessing hue.'

From *grain*='a dye' came *grain*='a fibre.' In a phrase like 'ingrained vice' the underlying notion is 'something deep down;' whence 'durable,' 'lasting.' Now *granum* was the strongest of dyes, technically a 'fast' colour, i.e. one that would not fade or wash off: cloth steeped in *grain* was red as long as it lasted. Cf. Shakespeare's

> "That's a fault that *water* will mend.
> No, Sir; 'tis *in grain:* Noah's *flood* could not do it"—
> *Comedy of Errors* III. 2. 108.

So *Twelfth Night* I. 5. 255. An *ingrained* fault, therefore, is one in which the character is, as it were, dyed through and through; and *grain* from connoting this sense of 'completeness' has, by a metaphor, become synonymous with *fibre*, so that we can speak of wood being 'hard in *grain*' without any reference to its colour. It should be added that

some editors would explain Milton's use of the word in this way. *Grain*, they say, has lost its notion of 'tint,' and in each of the above-quoted passages is equivalent to 'texture.' This seems to me less probable.

751. *Sampler.* A piece of needlework, such as Hermia and Helena had made, *Midsummer N. D.* III. 2. 205.

Tease is a technicality drawn from the art of cloth-manufacture, 'teasing' being the process by which the surface of the cloth is smoothed and roughnesses taken away. For this purpose a certain plant is employed, *Dipsacus Fullónum* or Clothier's Teasel, "with large heads of flowers, which are embedded in stiff, hooked bracts. These heads are set in frames and used in the dressing of broad-cloth, the hooks catching up and removing all loose particles of wool, but giving way when held fast by the substance of the cloth. This is almost the only process in the manufacture of cloth which it has been found impossible to execute by machinery"—*Flowers of the Field*, C. A. Johns, p. 314. The use of the word illustrates Milton's habit of introducing minute pieces of special knowledge, a habit which in *P. L.* he frequently carries too far.

Huswife's. Said contemptuously. *Huswife = housewife*, just as *husband = houseband*, where *band* represents a present participle = 'dwelling in.' *Huswife* was shortened to *hussy*, with a change in the meaning. Cf. Cotgrave: "*Coquette*: A fisking or fliperous minx...a talling housewife;" and Boyer: "*Huswife;* on se sert quelque fois de ce mot avec mépris, et alors c'est une espèce d'injure qui veut dire salope, ou petite impertinente. Mais dans ce sens on écrit ordinairement *Hussy*." In Shakespeare the quartos give the form *huswife*, not *housewife*, except in two passages in *Othello;* and the same holds good of the folios, save for three instances. Cf. also Sylvester, "In Hus-wife's Vse, or holy exercise," Grosart's ed. II. 292.

752. *Vermeil-tinctured lip.* Cf. *The Winter's Tale* III. 2. 206, 7:

"If you can bring
Tincture or lustre in her lips."

Tincture in Shakespeare always means 'colour;' cf. *The Two Gentlemen* IV. 4. 160, "the lily tincture of her face." *Vermeil* applied to the face belongs to the class of perpetual epithets. Cf. *Endymion* IV.:

"O Sorrow,
Why dost borrow
The natural hue of health from vermeil lips?"

It is the kind of studied description in which Gray delighted:

"With vermeil-cheek and whisper soft
She woos the tardy spring,"

Ode on Vicissitude.

Derived from *vermiculus*, 'a little worm,' among the explanations of which quoted by Du Cange are: *Lana rubra: vermiculum, rubrum sive coccineum: est enim vermiculus ex silvestribus frondibus, in quo lana tingitur.* In other words *vermiculus* was the cochineal insect, the dye called *coccum* or *granum* noticed above.

753. *Love-darting eyes.* The exact phrase is found in Sylvester's *Du Bartas:* "Whoso beholds her sweet, love-darting Eyn," Grosart's ed. I. p. 205. Pope borrowed it in the *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady:*

"Cold is that breast which warm'd the world before,
And those love-darting eyes must roll no more."

There is a similar compound in *Romeo and Juliet*, III. 2. 47, "death-darting eye of cockatrice."

Tresses like the morn. A Homeric reminiscence:

ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ τρίτον ἦμαρ ἐυπλόκαμος τέλεσ' Ἠώς.

So Spenser:

"And fayre Aurora, with her rosie heare."

Vergil's Gnat, IX.

Tress is a favourite word with Milton; cf. *P. L.* IV. 305—307 (where he repeats part of a line (47) in *Arcades*), *P. L.* V. 10, *Nativity Ode* 187. Derived through the French *tresse* and *tresser* from Low Lat. *trica*, 'a plait,' itself the Gr. τρίχα, 'in three parts,' there being a method of plaiting the hair thus.

754, 755. The couplet sounds like an echo of some words in the Latin play mentioned in the *Introduction: Quæ mortalium sine voluptate vita est? pœna est. Hanc, si sapere constituisti, fuge: illam carpe; et quem in finem benigna te natura produxerit cogita.*

755. *You are but young yet.* A somewhat personal reference, as the Lady Alice Egerton to whom the words are addressed was only twelve years old. It is worth noting that the whole passage from "List, lady," 737, down to 755, though extant in the *Cambridge MS.*, is wanting in the Bridgewater copy. This shows that the lines were not spoken at the actual performance.

756—761. Said aside.

756. Cf. *S. A.* 407, "I yielded, and unlocked her all my heart."

757. *Juggler.* Fr. *jongleur;* L. *joculator.* The bad sense of the word, 'charlatan,' 'cheat,' is invariable in Shakespeare; cf. too Boyer's definition of *mountebank*, "a wandering and juggling physician, a quack."

759. *Pranked.* "An old word," says Todd, "used by Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakespeare for *affectedly decorated.*" "Affectedly" might be omitted. In Spenser and Shakespeare *prank*='to dress,' 'deck,' without any idea of affectation; cf. *Twelfth Night* II. 4. 89:

> "But 'tis that miracle and queen of gems,
> That nature pranks her in, attracts my soul."

A favourite word with Herrick in the *Hesperides:* e.g.

> "Some prank them up with oaken leaves."
>
> *The Harvest Home.*

Shelley has it:

> "There grew broad flag flowers, purple prankt with white."
>
> *The Question.*

The early dictionaries illustrate its use; cf. Cotgrave under *Ajolier:* "To pranke, tricke up, set out, make fine." Still better Palsgrave: "I pranke ones goune, I set the plyghtes ('folds,' see note on l. 301) in order, i.e. mets les plies d'une robe à poynt. Se yonder olde man, his goune is pranked as if he were but a yonge man"—*Lesclarcissement de la langue Francoyse* (1530). *Pranker*='one who dresses gaily,' *prankie*='fine, gorgeous,' *Mayhew and Skeat.* Allied to a now obsolete word *prink*='to trim,' which in turn was a nasalised form of *prick.* Skeat mentions a Lowland Scotch verb *preek*='to be spruce.' *Prance* (of a horse) means 'to make a show.' *Prunk* (in German)='pomp,' 'parade.' All cognate words.

760. *Bolt.* The idea is drawn from the preparation of flour. To 'bolt' (more correctly *boult*) is to sift the meal from the bran. An apposite illustration occurs in *Coriolanus* III. 1. 320—3:

> "Consider this:—he has been bred i' the wars
> Since he could draw a sword, and is ill school'd
> In bolted language; meal and bran together
> He throws without distinction."

Having this sense, 'refining,' 'sifting,' the verb, by a natural metaphor, *was specially* used of any argumentative process; cf. Baret's *Alvearie (1580),* "To boulte. Curiously to discurse and boulte out the truth

in reasoning." Hence the legal expression *boltings* = "the private arguing of law cases for practice"—*New English Dictionary*. Dr Murray quotes Stow's *Survey*, IX. ed. 1603, p. 79: "They frequent readings, meetings, boltings, and other learned exercises." Milton in the *Animadversions upon the Remonstrants' Defence* (1641) refers to his opponent as "this passing fine sophistical boulting-hutch," *Prose Works*, Symmons' ed. I. p. 170. The present line therefore could be paraphrased: "I hate to see Vice picking out her arguments with the subtle skill of a lawyer." The derivation of *bolt* is as follows: Low Latin *burra* = 'coarse red cloth,' *vestis cujusdam vilioris generis* (Forcellini). *Burra* (cf. note on *bur*, l. 352) appears in O. F. as *buire;* modern F. *bure* = 'rough cloth.' Thence came a verb *bureter*, afterwards corrupted into *buleter*, *l* often displacing *r* (e.g. *pèlerin* from *peregrinus*). *Buleter* passed into *bulter*, and from the latter to English *boulte* (which Palsgrave writes in the *Lesclarcissement*) was an easy transition. The original meaning, then, was 'to sift through red cloth.' A *bureau* is a desk covered with cloth of this kind; and the colour, *red*, reminds us that the root of all the above-mentioned words is seen in Gk πῦρ.

764. *Cateress.* We might compare a passage in Nash's *Pierce Penilesse:* "They drawe out a dinner with sallets...and make Madonna Nature their best caterer." *Cate* has an interesting history. It should be *acate* = "things purchased; such provisions as were not made in the house, but had to be purchased fresh when wanted, as meat, fish etc. Hence all provisions except the home produce of the baker and brewer; foreign viands, dainties, delicacies"—*New English Dictionary*. The original English form varied between *achate* (reflecting the influence of O. F., XIIth century, *achat*), and *acate* (Norman *acat*). Then, roughly speaking, the words split up; *achate* = 'purchase:' *acate* = 'provision.' The latter is common prior to XVIIth century. Dr Murray quotes *Household Ord. of Henry VIII.*, 1526: "To make provision of fresh acate, as well for flesh as fish." So Chaucer, *Prologue* 573, Spenser, *Faerie Queene* II. 9. 31, and Ben Jonson in the *Sad Shepherd*, I. 3:

"Bread, wine, acates, fowl, feather, fish or fin."

Acates also appeared in the aphetised form *cates* which Shakespeare always employs. Of this shortened form the *New Dictionary* does not give any instance earlier than 1461; cf. *Ord. Royal Household*, 1461—1483, "Upon frydaye is made paymente for all manner of fresh *cates*." Derived from Low Latin *acceptare*, frequentative of accipere, meaning *'to buy.'* Cf. modern F. *acheter*, achat, etc. Du Cange

s. v. *acceptare* has: *Hinc nostri vocem* Acheter, *seu ut Picardi efferunt*, acater, *vel ut est apud Froissartem* achapter, *pro* emere *hauserunt.* "Aphesis," it may be explained, is the convenient term invented by Dr Murray for the numerous cases where an initial letter or syllable has been lost. Words abbreviated in this way are called "aphetic." Usually they are of French origin (Skeat, *Principles*, p. 385); but among purely English words cf. *down=adown; lone=alone.*

767. The verse has a kind of verbal irony, retorting Comus' own words, "in a pet of temperance," l. 721. The magician had dismissed severe sobriety of living as a mere ill-considered freak: she replies that it is a holy beneficent power, an aspect of σωφροσύνη. Cf. *Il Pen.* 46, "Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet;" and the still more significant lines in the sixth *Elegy*, 55—78, translated, as follows, by Cowper:

"But they, who demi-gods and heroes praise,
And feats performed in Jove's more youthful days,
Who now the counsels of high heaven explore,
Now shades, that echo the Cerberean roar,
Simply let these, like him of Samos, live,
Let herbs to them a bloodless banquet give;
In beechen goblets let their beverage shine,
Cool from the crystal spring their sober wine.
Their youth should pass in innocence secure
From stain licentious, and in manners pure,
Pure as the priest, when robed in white he stands,
The fresh lustration ready in his hands.
Thus Linus lived, and thus, as poets write,
Tiresias, wiser for his loss of sight.
Thus exiled Chalcas, thus the bard of Thrace,
Melodious tamer of the savage race.
Thus trained by temperance, Homer led of yore
His chief of Ithaca from shore to shore,
Through magic Circe's monster-peopled reign
And shoals insidious with the siren train;
And through the realms, where grizzly spectres dwell,
Whose tribes he fettered in a gory spell;
For these are sacred bards, and from above
Drink large infusions from the mind of Jove."

These lines bear directly on the purport of *Comus*; see the Introduction.

Temperance, as we might expect, is a word of very frequent occurrence in Milton's writings.

767—774. The argument of Gloster in *Lear* IV. 1. 73, 74, that

> "Distribution should undo excess,
> And each man have enough."

The language of the two passages is so similar as to lead us to think that Milton was intentionally expanding Shakespeare's words.

773. *Unsuperfluous*, i.e. not super-abundant. Now *superfluous*= 'unnecessary,' a derived meaning, from the original sense 'excessive.' The latter is common in early E. Hall speaking of *Richard III.*, *sub anno* 1483, says: "Whether it was with the melencoly, and anger that he toke with the Frenche King,...or were it by any superfluous surfet (to the whiche he was muche geuen) he sodainely fell sicke" (*Chronicle*, p. 339). In *Lear* IV. 1. 70 (cf. last note), the rich man is "superfluous," not because there is no place for him in the world, but because he has too much to live on.

774. *Whit.* "The *h* is misplaced; *whit* is put for *wiht*, the same as *wight*, a person, also a thing, bit"—*Skeat.*

777. *Gorgeous;* from Fr. *gorge* (Lat. *gurges*, and Low Lat. *gorgia*, 'throat'). To puff out the throat was regarded as a mark of pride; cf. modern use of *se rengorger*='to bridle up.' Hence *gorgeous*= 'showy.' These verses (776—7) are partially repeated in *P. R.* 114:

> "Their sumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous feasts."

779—806. Wanting in the *Cambridge* and *Bridgewater MSS.* Milton added the verses to bring out the moral of the Masque. They come more naturally from the mature writer of 1645 than the young poet of 1634.

782. "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun."—*Revelation* xii. 1. The editors quote a parallel phrase from Petrarch. In line 425 Milton celebrates "the sacred rays of chastity." We have the compound *sun-bright* in *P. L.* VI. 100.

784. It needs little critical insight to see that from here to the end of the speech the speaker is not the young girl, but Milton himself; and the best commentary on the language and philosophy of the passage is contained in the following extract from the prose-tract, *An Apology for Smectymnus:* "Thus from the laureat fraternity of poets, riper years and the ceaseless round of study and reading led me to the shady spaces of philosophy; but chiefly to the divine volumes of Plato, and

his equal Xenophon: where, if I should tell ye what I learnt of chastity and love, I mean that which is truly so, whose charming cup is only virtue, which she bears in her hand to those who are worthy; (the rest are cheated with a thick intoxicating potion, which a certain sorceress, the abuser of love's nature, carries about;) and how the first and chiefest office of love begins and ends in the soul, producing those happy twins of her divine generation, knowledge and virtue: with such abstracted sublimities as these, it might be worth your listening, readers."—*Prose Works*, vol. I. p. 225, Symmons' ed. So in the same treatise: "Having had the doctrine of Holy Scripture, unfolding those chaste and high mysteries, with timeliest care infused, that the body is for the Lord." We can scarcely resist the impression that Milton in writing these sentences recollected his earlier vindication of the "serious doctrine of Virginity." Apart from verbal coincidences, the "charming cup" of love at once recalls "the pleasing poison" (526) of Comus.

784. *Thou hast nor ear.* Cf. l. 997: "List mortals, if your ears be true." Comus cannot hear, or hearing will not understand, her praise of purity, just as in *Arcades*, 72, 73, "the gross unpurged ear" of humanity may not catch the echo of music from the spheres.

785. *Notion*, i.e. idea, or perhaps doctrine. Milton uses the word in only two other passages, viz. *P. L.* VIII. 187, where the sense is 'fancy' ("notions vain"), and *P. L.* VII. 179:

"So told as earthly notion can receive."

In the latter *notion* = 'mind' or 'intellectual power,' its invariable meaning in Shakespeare. Cf. *Lear* I. 4. 248, "his notion weakens."

Mystery, i.e. less the *mystery* of modern E. than μυστήριον as used by St Paul; e.g. in 1 *Cor.* ii. 2. 7: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom."

788. *Art worthy*, i.e. deserve, in a bad sense. A rare use, but cf. *Winter's Tale* II. 3. 109, "worthy to be hanged."

793. *Uncontrolled*, i.e. worth left to speak for itself, not set off by fine rhetoric. Possibly, however, *uncontrolled* = 'uncontrollable;' that is, 'irresistible.' Cf. *Lucrece* 645:

"My uncontrolled tide
Turns not."

For the uncertain force of the participial termination see l. 349.

794. *Rapt.* This might be written *rapped*; it is the past part. of *rap* = 'to seize hastily,' 'snatch;' cf. *Cymbeline* I. 6. 50, 51:

"What, dear sir,
Thus raps you?"

i.e. what transports you? Popular etymology (and apparently Milton himself, *P. L.* III. 522) connected it with Latin *rapio*, and conceived that *rapt=raptus;* quite erroneously, since *rap* is a Teutonic word. Cf. the phrase *rape and renne*, 'to seize and plunder,' *Mayhew and Skeat*, s. v. *rapen*. The word has experienced another vicissitude: we sometimes meet with *wrapt*='enraptured,' i.e. as a variant form of *rapt*. Cf. Beattie's *Minstrel*, I,

"Lo! where the stripling, wrapt in wonder, roves;"

and Shelley's *Prometheus*, III. 3, "Painting, Sculpture and wrapt Poesy." The introduction of the *w* seems to have been arbitrary: "in the sixteenth century there was a prodigal disposition to put *w* before words beginning with an *H* or with an *R*."—Earle, p. 159. This was due to false analogy. There were a number of words that commenced with *wh* and *wr*, such as *wheat*, *who*, *whither*, *write*, *wrong*, etc.; and it was to bring other words into conformity with these groups that *w* was prefixed where it had no business to be. For a conspicuous instance we may take *whot=hot*, which Spenser has several times, e.g. *F. Q.* II. 9. 29. Ralegh's contemporaries now and then wrote the name *Wrawly*. Earle treats *wrapt=rapt* as an example of the same tendency.

797. *Brute*. 'Dull,' 'unsympathising:' the *bruta tellus* of Horace, *Odes* I. xxxiv. 9. Cf. Tennyson's

"The brute earth lightens to the sky."
In Memoriam, CXXVII.

Nerves, i.e. sinews (L. *nervi*), its usual sense in Shakespeare.

800—806. Spoken aside; but see note on l. 779.

800. Cf. 1 *Henry VI.* IV. 2. 42: "He fables not; I hear the enemy."

802, i.e. though I am not mortal.

803—806. Referring to the war between the gods and the Titans. *The wrath of Jove*='the wrathful Jove' is one of those abstract phrases of which Milton is fond. A curious example occurs in *P. L.* II. 963—6:

"And by them stood
Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name
Of Demogorgon;"

i.e. Demogorgon himself.

805. *I must dissemble.* This hackneyed phrase occurs first in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, IV.; cf. also 2 *Henry VI.* V. 1. 13.

807. *Mere.* Perhaps in the sense 'only;' but *mere* (from *merus*) in Shakespeare (and later) often signified 'absolute,' 'complete;' cf. *Merchant of Venice* III. 2. 265, "engaged my friend to his mere enemy." So *merely*='entirely,' 'quite:' e.g. in *Hamlet* I. 2. 137:

> "'Tis an unweeded garden,
> That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
> Possess it merely."

808. Cf. *Coriolanus* I. 10. 26, "against the hospitable Canon," i.e. against the rule of hospitality. So the same play, III. 1. 90. *Canon Laws* is said in reference to the technical phrase *Canon Law*, i.e. "ecclesiastical law as laid down in decrees of the pope and statutes of Councils" (*New English Dictionary*). Formerly the words were reversed, the French *droit canon* appearing in English as *Law Canon*. At times the expression was abbreviated to *The Canon*. Warton notes that Milton in several of his prose tracts uses *Canon* in contemptuous combinations: e.g. "Canon-iniquity;" "an insulting and only Canon-wise prelate." To the Puritan poet anything suggestive of Roman Catholicism was distasteful. The study of Canon Law was forbidden at Cambridge in 1538. From κανών=rule.

Foundation: spoken as though Comus represented some religious institution. "God save the foundation" is Dogberry's petition, *Much Ado* V. 1. 327, that being the form of thanks usual among those who received alms at the door of a monastery.

809, 810. Suggested, possibly, by Sylvester:

> "the clutted mud,
> Sunk down in Lees, Earth's *Melancholy* showes,
> The pale thin humour."—Grosart, I. 28.

Cf. *P. L.* XI. 543—45. Todd quotes Nash's *Terrors of the Night*, 1594: "The grossest part of our blood is the melancholy humour; which, in the spleen congealed (whose office it is to displace it), with his thick-steaming fenny vapours casts a mist over the spirit... It (melancholy) sinketh down to the bottom like the lees of the wine, corrupteth all the blood, and is the cause of lunacy."—Grosart's ed. in *Huth Library*, III. 232. There is a similar allusion in *S. A.* 600 to *the old physiology*, "which accounted for diseases and states of the *body and mind* generally by the action of various kinds of 'humours,'"

Masson, III. 329. The latter play a great part in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

809. *Lees*, i.e. dregs; Fr. *lie*. Du Cange s. v. *amurca* has: *Gallis* Lie...*Alii* liam, *id est*, *fæces vini calcinati*. But this derivation of *lie* from Low Lat. *lia* is very doubtful. Brachet does not accept it.

The stage directions in the *Cambridge* and *Bridgewater MSS.* represent the Attendant Spirit (whom they call *Dæmon*) as coming in with the brothers. His entrance after the tumult has subsided seems more effective—especially in view of the following speech which blames them for not carrying out the onslaught in accordance with his directions.

814. If the "false enchanter" had not escaped, there would have been no place for Sabrina as the *dea ex machina*.

815. Cf. l. 653, "but seize his wand."

816, 817. *Rod reversed*, etc. An old theory: Warton quotes Ovid, *Metamorphoses* XIV. 299—301:

> *Spargimur innocuæ succis melioribus herbæ,*
> *Percutimurque caput conversæ verbere virgæ,*
> *Verbaque dicuntur dictis contraria verbis.*

Milton may have remembered the scene in the *Faerie Queene*, III. 12. 30—42, in which Britomart effects the release of Amoret. In stanza 36 the magician is forced

> "to overlooke
> Those cursed leaves, his charmes back to reverse."

We may, perhaps, compare the old superstition that witches said their orisons backwards. Addison mentions "a little epigram called the Witches' Prayer, that fell into verse when it was read either backward or forward, excepting only that it cursed one way and blessed the other"—*Spectator*, no. 61, on *False Wit*.

822. *Melibœus*. Intended, conceivably, as a somewhat sarcastic allusion to Geoffrey of Monmouth, the Chronicler whose account Milton followed (see note on line 841), but who was not the "soothest," i.e. most trustworthy, of men. If, as Masson suggests, the reference was meant it would be parallel to Spenser's mentioning Chaucer under the pastoral pseudonym *Tityrus*. See *The Shepheards Calender*, *Februarie*, 93, 94, with the *Glosse;* and compare Milton's *Mansus* 34, where again *Tityrus* stands for the author of the *Canterbury Tales*.

823. *Soothest*. 'Truest.' A. S. *sōð* = 'true;' whence forsooth, i.e. *for a truth*, *soothsay*, to tell the truth. Observe the double o. It was

meant to convey the sound of the A. S. long *o*; that is, of *oa* in a word like *boat*. Up till the middle of the XVth century *sooth* had the sound which we should give to *soathe*. After 1550, or thereabout, the *oa* sound shifted to the modern *ū* sound, but the spelling remained unchanged. This applies to many words—*cool*, *gloom*, *doom*, *tool*, *moon*, etc. They were written with a double *o*, sometimes also with a single *o*; and in either case the sound intended, and in pronunciation heard, was not as now long *u*, but long *o*. This alteration was only part of a general rearrangement of the sound-equivalents for the long A. S. vowels. See Skeat, *Principles*, pp. 49 et seq. An attempt to make *soothest*='sweetest' was checked by Professor Skeat, *Notes and Queries*, 6th Series, vol. III. p. 452. *Sote* was a recognised Middle E. form of *sweet*; but it could not have made its superlative with *th*.

825. *Severn*. Chosen out of compliment to the audience. Milton had previously hinted at the legend, *Vacation Exercise* 96:

"Or Severn swift, guilty of maiden's death;"

where there is an echo of 1 *Hen. IV.* I. 3. 103.

826—841. The story of Sabrina had been previously told, with sundry variations, by several poets: by Drayton in the *Polyolbion*, Sixth Song, by Warner in *Albion's England*, and Spenser in the *Faerie Queene*, II. 10. 14—19. The first presentment, however, of the legend occurs in the Latin History of the Britons by Geoffrey of Monmouth (made Bishop of St Asaph in 1152). This Milton reproduced in his own prose History of England; and his version may be given as conveniently explaining the references in our text. He relates how Brutus landed in Albion, built Troja Nova (afterwards called Trinovantum = London), and at his death left his territory to Locrine, Albanact, and Camber, his three sons. Locrine later on defeated Humber, king of the Huns, who had invaded Britain, and, says Milton, "among the spoils of his camp and navy were found certain young maids, and Estrildis above the rest, passing fair, the daughter of a king in Germany; whom Locrine, though before contracted to the daughter of Corineus [a Trojan warrior who accompanying Brutus to Britain had received Cornwall as his share of the conquered territory], resolves to marry. But being forced and threatened by Corineus, whose authority and power he feared, Guendolen the daughter he yields to marry, but *in secret loves the* other: and.....had by her a daughter equally fair, *whose name was* Sabra. But when once his fear was off by the death *of Corineus, divorcing* Guendolen, he makes Estrildis now his queen.

Guendolen, all in rage, departs into Cornwall, where Madan, the son she had by Locrine, was hitherto brought up by Corineus his grandfather. And gathering an army of her father's friends and subjects, gives battle to her husband by the river Sture (i.e. Stour); wherein Locrine, shot with an arrow, ends his life. But not so ends the fury of Guendolen: for Estrildis, and her daughter Sabra, she throws into a river: and, to leave a monument of revenge, proclaims that the stream be thenceforth called after the damsel's name; which, by length of time, is changed now to Sabrina, or Severn"—Prose Works, Symmons' ed. vol. IV. pp. 11, 12. This account, it will be noted, differs in one detail from that adopted in *Comus*. Milton had contemplated making the early history of Britain, more especially the Arthurian cycle of romance, the theme of his great work. See the *Introduction*.

830. *Step-dame.* Used rather loosely, as may be gathered from the previous note. Shakespeare preferred *step-dame* to *step-mother*, the latter occurring only once, *Cymbeline* I. i. 71. *Step* is from A. S. *steóp*='orphaned.' The oldest compound is *steópcild*='step-child.' We find also *steóp-bearn*='step-bairn.' As *steóp* means 'orphaned,' 'deprived of parents,' these compounds seem more correctly formed than *step-father*, *step-mother*. Compare the German use of *stief* in *stief-mutter*, *stief-kind*, etc.

833. In the *Sad Shepherd*, I. i, the mourning lover Æglamour, lamenting for the lost Earine whom he supposes to have been drowned in the Trent, denounces the river-maidens:

"Those nymphs,
Those treacherous nymphs, pulled in Earine."

834. *Pearled wrists.* Herrick in his *Teares to Thamasis* speaks of the "pure and silver-wristed Naiads," Carew Hazlitt's ed. p. 339. The description here illustrates the conventionalism into which poetry may fall, pearl being so frequently associated with the deities of river or sea. Thus a stage direction in Ben Jonson's *Masque of Blackness* tells us that the nymphs wore on "the front, ear, necks and wrists, ornament of the most choice and orient pearl." Again, in the same entertainment, the river-god Niger had "his front, neck and wrists adorned with pearl." Doubtless when Sabrina appeared later on with her company of water-nymphs the audience could appreciate with their own eyes the picturesqueness and truth of the present verse. Pearls are found in many parts of Great Britain, particularly in some

of the Welsh rivers, e.g. the Esk and Conway. (Streeter, *Precious Stones*, part III. pp. 23, 24.)

836. *Lank*, i.e. drooping. A correct use, as probably the original meaning of A. S. *hlanc* was 'bending.' The usual sense—'slim,' 'slender,'—came later. *Lank* has lost the *h*; cf. *ladder* from A. S. *hlæder*. An initial *hl* or *hn* or *hr* is common in A. S.; and the *h* always disappears.

838. I.e. baths into which nectar had been poured and in which asphodel flowers were floating. Cf. *S. A.* 1726—28:

"and from the stream,
With lavers pure and cleansing herbs, wash off
The clotted gore."

Giles Fletcher describes water falling from the roof of the Hall of Vaine Delight:

"it leapt with speede,
And in the rosie laver seem'd to bleed,"

Christ's Victorie on Earth 48, Grosart's ed. p. 154. *Laver* must have been in current use, as it occurs several times in the Authorised Version; e.g. *Exodus* xxx. 18; xxxv. 16.

Nectared often has much the same force as *ambrosial*, i.e. fragrant. Cf. the present poem, 479, and the ode on the *Death of a Fair Infant*, 49:

"Amongst us here below to hide thy nectared head."

839. Clearly a reminiscence of *Hamlet* I. 5. 63, 64:

"And in the porches of mine ears did pour
The leperous distilment."

840. The editors find here, perhaps fancifully, certain echoes of the *Iliad;* e.g. of book XIX. 38, where Thetis anoints the dead body of Patroclus; and book XXIII. 186, where Aphrodite performs the same office:

ῥοδόεντι δὲ χρῖεν ἐλαίῳ
ἀμβροσίῳ.

For *ambrosial* see line 16, note.

841. I.e. a quick change to immortality; cf. "mortal change," l. 10.

845. *Urchin blasts.* Masson says, "evil strokes from the hedgehog." Certainly *urchin* usually signifies a hedgehog, and hedgehogs were considered ill-omened and malefic; cf. *Tempest* I. 2. 326, and II.

2. 5, 10. But from the belief that evil spirits sometimes took the form of a hedgehog, *urchin* came to mean a sprite or wicked elf. So Shakespeare uses the word in *Merry Wives*, IV. 4. 49: "Like urchins, ouphs and fairies;" and many other illustrations might be quoted. Reginald Scot in the *Discouerie of Witchcraft* (a storehouse of information on such subjects) enumerates the most common evil agencies: "Bull beggers, spirits, witches, vrchens, elues, hags, fairies," etc., book VII. chap. xv. p. 153, ed. 1584. Cf., again, Harsnet's *Declaration of Popish Impostures* (the book on which Shakespeare drew in writing *King Lear*), p. 14 (ed. 1603): "and further, these ill-mannered urchins did swarme about the priests." *Urchin blasts* therefore must='blasts (upon corn, etc.) sent by bad fairies.' From *urchin*='imp' comes, naturally enough, the modern *urchin*='a small boy.' Derived from O. F. *ireçon;* cf. modern *herisson*, Lat. *ericius*, Gk. χήρ. The central idea is 'bristliness.'

Ill-luck signs. For the typical tricks played by evil powers see *L' Al.* 104—112, and *Midsummer N. D.* II. 1. 32—56, where Puck is described as a "shrewd and knavish sprite." Cf. also Edgar's account in *Lear*, III. 4. 123, of the "foul fiend" who "mildews the white wheat, and hurts the poor creature of the earth."

846. *Shrewd*, Middle E. *schrewed* (the past participle of *schrewen* ='to curse'), meant originally 'bad.' Thus Wycliffe translated καὶ πᾶν φαῦλον πρᾶγμα in *James* iii. 16 by "al schrewed werk." This sense is frequent in Shakespeare: e.g. "shrewd days and nights" ='times of ill fortune,' *As You Like It* v. 4. 179: "foul shrewd news" ='bad news,' *King John* v. 4. 14: and "a shrewd turn," where we should say "a bad turn," occurs in *All's Well*, III. 5. 71, and elsewhere. Then came the meaning 'malicious' (which obviously suits the present passage); especially 'malicious of tongue.' Hermia, when angry, was "keen and shrewd," in fact *shrewish*, *Midsummer N. D.* III. 2. 323. Lastly there is the sense to which the word is now limited—'cunning,' 'clever:' "he has a shrewd wit," *Troilus and Cressida*, I. 2. 206.

849. *Carol.* The noun *carol* (from O. F. *carole*) may be a corruption of Lat. *corolla*, through Low Lat. *carola*, the connection in sense being (i) a chain, as of pearls, (ii) a round dance, (iii) a song accompanying the dance, (iv) any song. Thus the *Catholicon Anglicum* (1483) translates *caralle* by *chorus* and *corea;* see Way's note on the *Promptorium*, s. v. *caral.*

850. *A recognised* method in pastoral verse of showing gratitude. *In Phineas Fletcher's* days the Cam received these honours.

"Ungrateful Chame! how oft thy Thyrsis crown'd
With songs and garlands thy obscurer head."
Piscatorie Eclogues, II. 8.

Cf. Spenser's *Prothalamion*, stanza 5.

851. Cf. *Lyc.* 144, "The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet." In Gerard's *Herbal* the pansy (from Fr. *pensée*, cf. *Hamlet* IV. 5. 178) is described as "in English Harts Ease...Liue in Idlenes (cf. *Midsummer N. D.* II. 1. 168), Cull me to you, and three faces in a hood," p. 705, ed. 1597. The root of *pink* is seen in French *piquer*, the flower being so-called from its *peaked* edges.

Daffodil is a corruption of *asphodel*, ἀσφόδελος (a species of narcissus). The Middle E. form was *affodille* from Low Lat. *affodillus*. Cotgrave writes, "th' affodill, or asphrodill flower." How the *d* was inserted is not certain; possibly through French *fleur d'affrodille*, translated "daffodil-flower." (Skeat.) We find the form *daffadilly* in *Lyc.* 150, and the *Shepheards Cal., April;* also *daffadowndilly* in the latter poem. Shakespeare celebrates the flower in some beautiful lines, *Winter's Tale* IV. 4. 118—120, and Gerard enumerates, pp. 108—116, such varieties as were then known.

852. Really what follows was an addition by Milton to the account of the Chronicler. It may have been due to Drayton. In the Fifth Song of the *Polyolbion* we find that Sabrina was

"by Nereus taught, the most profoundly wise,
That learned her the skill of hidden prophecies,
By Thetis' special care."

See note on l. 871.

853. *The clasping charm.* Cf. Drayton, "gloomy magicks, and benumbing charms," *The Barons Wars* II. 12. Campion in the *Masque at the Marriage of the Earl of Somerset* (1613) appeals to the Good Genius of the piece:

"She, only she,
Can all knotted spells untie;"

the friendly providence in that case being the Queen, who was present, Bullen's *Campion*, p. 218. The professional witch had a book of spells which she studied in secret:

"reading by the glowworm's light
The baneful schedule of her nocent charms,
And binding characters"—*The Sad Shepherd* II. 2.

Song: i.e. a solo, sung by Lawes and continued down to line 866.

How the rest of the passage was treated—from 867 to 889—is not certain. See note on 867.

We have commented elsewhere (*Introduction*) upon Johnson's extraordinary criticism of the lyrics in *Comus*. As an antidote we may take Mr Saintsbury's remarks: "It is impossible to single out passages (i.e. from *Comus*), for the whole is golden. The entering address of Comus, the song 'Sweet Echo,' the descriptive speech of the Spirit, and the magnificent eulogy of the 'sun-clad power of chastity,' would be the most beautiful things where all is beautiful, if the unapproachable 'Sabrina fair' did not come later, and were not sustained before and after, for nearly two hundred lines of pure nectar."—*Elizabethan Literature*, pp. 321, 322.

861. *Translucent.* Milton prefers this form; cf. *S. A.* 548:

"Against the eastern ray translucent, pure."

Ben Jonson writes *tralucent;* cf. the *Masque of Beauty*, "In these squares, the sixteen Masquers were placed; behind them in the centre of the throne was a tralucent pillar."

862. Ben Jonson introduces the river-god Thames in *Part of the King's Entertainment* with "a crown of sedge and reed upon his head, mixed with water-lilies." No doubt, when Sabrina later on appears she wears a chaplet of lilies and other water-flowers. In such matters the Masque-writers followed stage-traditions.

863. *Amber-dropping.* Some editors prosaically suggest that there is a reference here to *ambergris;* cf. *S. A.* 720, "an amber scent of odorous perfume." Masson more happily explains *amber* as an allusion to the hair of the goddess through which waterdrops are trickling. This seems correct. Sabrina would have yellow locks to symbolise the colour of the river-waves. Compare *P. L.* III. 359, where the River of Bliss

"Rolls o'er Elysian flowers her amber stream;"

and *P. R.* 288. So Gray in the *Progress of Poesy*, II. 3, speaks of "Mæander's amber waves." The epithet, a favourite with Milton, reminds us of Horace's *vidimus flavum Tiberim;* or Matthew Arnold's

"Great Oxus stream,
The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die."
Sohrab and Rustum.

In these cases the adjective is picturesque because it adds to the colour

of the narrative; and may be literally true, because the tint of the river is often affected by the soil of the land through which it flows.

867. Milton intended the solo to end with line 866, inserting before line 867 the direction—*To be said;* i.e. Lawes was to recite the remaining verses down to 889. The *Bridgewater MS.* changed the direction—*The Verse to sing or not;* and in the margin showed how the lines might be distributed between Lawes and the two brothers, each taking a part in succession. The passage, that is, would be rendered in the musical recitative for which the composer was famous; cf. the direction *stilo recitativo* prefixed to a lyric passage in Jonson's *Vision of Delight.* This, besides being very effective in a piece of invocation interspersed with so many proper names, would afford an agreeable contrast to the songs that preceded and followed. No doubt, every detail of this kind was carefully debated, the decision resting with Lawes.

868. *Great Oceanus.* The god of the river Oceanus which was supposed to encircle the world. The epithets applied to him in the *Iliad* emphasise his power; cf. *Iliad* XIV. 245 ("father of all streams"); the same book, 311; and XXI. 195—6 ("the great strength of deep-flowing Ocean, from whom all rivers flow"). Vergil describes him as *patrem rerum, G.* IV. 382. His palace was vaguely placed in the west, *Iliad* XIV. 303.

869. *Earth-shaking.* In Homer, Poseidon is κινητὴρ γαῖς, ἐννοσίγαιος, ἐνοσίχθων, "either because he is the lord of earthquakes or simply because the waves of the sea are for ever beating the land"—Leaf, *Iliad* IX. 183. Neptune being identified in the Roman poets with the Greek deity, "all the attributes of the latter are transferred to the former"—Smith's *Dictionary of Classical Mythology.*

870. *Tethys.* Wife of Oceanus; mentioned once only in Homer, *Iliad* XIV. 201. *Tethys Festival* was the title of a Masque by Daniel (1610) in which the queen took part.—Nichol's *Progresses of James I.* II. 346—58; Warton's *History of English Poetry,* III. 319.

871. *Nereus' wrinkled look.* Nereus was the father of the Nereids, dwelling at the bottom of the sea. Leaf remarks, *Iliad* I. 358, that he appears in Homer as πατὴρ γέρων and ἅλιος γέρων (the latter being a title of Proteus), but is never mentioned by name. His empire was the Ægean. "The epithets given him by the poets refer to his old age, his kindliness, and his trustworthy knowledge of the future"—*Dict. of Mythology.* Cf. Vergil's *grandævus Nereus, G.* IV. 392. There is special appropriateness in the twofold appeal to Thetis and Nereus; see note on lines 852, 53.

872. The "Carpathian wizard" is Proteus, "the prophetic old man of the sea;" ἅλιος γέρων, like Nereus. He is called *Egyptian* in the fourth book of the *Odyssey*, l. 385, in accordance with the legend which assigned the isle of Pharos in Egypt as his dwelling-place. In other stories, however, the island of Carpathos (between Crete and Rhodes) is his home: hence Vergil's

Est in Carpathio Neptuni gurgite vates,
Cæruleus Proteus.—*G.* IV. 387, 88.

The *locus classicus* on Proteus is the speech of Menelaus to Telemachus, in which he reports how Eidothea, daughter of Proteus, described the movements of the old man, and how afterwards that account was verified when Menelaus and his companions found "the ancient one of the magic arts" asleep, *Odyssey* IV. 350—570. Note the number of allusions crowded into the line. Proteus is a "wizard" partly because, like most marine deities, he had the power of foreseeing; cf. Homer's epithet for him, νημερτής, and Vergil's

Novit namque omnia vates,
Quæ sint, quæ fuerint, quæ mox ventura trahantur.
G. IV. 392, 3;

partly because he could alter his shape. In this latter accomplishment he was not singular: "A world-old fancy, that has penetrated all nations, finds in sorcery the power to hide or change one's figure" (Grimm). This superstition has given us our word *Protean* = 'shifting,' 'changeable;' and Milton happily refers to it in describing the processes of chemistry, *P. L.* III. 603—605. Again, Proteus bears a "hook," in virtue of his office of shepherd to the flocks (seals) of Poseidon; see the long passage in *Odyssey* IV. already mentioned (350—570); *Georgic* IV. 390 et seq.; Horace, *Odes* I. 2. 7. Finally, Proteus appears not infrequently in Masques; he is "the gray prophet of the sea" in Ben Jonson's *Masque of Beauty*.

873. *Scaly Triton's winding shell. Scaly*, because Triton (somewhat like the figure of Sin in *P. L.* II. 651) *desinit in piscem*. Ben Jonson introduces six Tritons in the *Masque of Blackness*, "their upper parts human, save that their hairs were blue (see note on line 29), as partaking of the sea-colour: their desinent parts fish."

Winding = 'crooked,' 'curling;' cf. Wordsworth's line,

"Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn,"

from the sonnet that begins "The world is too much with us." But

winding might also mean 'sounding;' as we speak of 'winding a horn.' So Keats must have taken the line; cf. "shell-winding Triton," *Endymion* II. Milton has a similar reference in the Latin poem *Naturam non pati Senium*, 57, 58:

rauca circumstrepit æquora concha
Oceani Tubicen;

rendered by Cowper--

"o'er the deep is heard
The hoarse alarm of Triton's sounding shell."

874. *Soothsaying Glaucus' spell.* Glaucus was the Bœotian fisherman who eating of a certain herb became metamorphosed into a sea-god. He, too, possessed the gift of prophesying; hence *soothsaying* and *spell.* He was associated with the expedition of the Argonauts, having built the ship Argo. Vergil mentions him by name, *G.* I. 437. Ovid is more detailed, *Metamorphoses*, book XIII. 900 et seq.

875. Milton alludes to the "daughter of Cadmus, Ino of the fair ankles, Leucothea, who in time past was a maiden of mortal speech, but now in the depths of the salt sea she had gotten her share of worship from the gods," *Odyssey* V. 333—335. She was the wife of Athamas, by whom she had two sons. Athamas in a fit of madness killed one son; she with the other (see next line) plunged into the sea, and became a sea-goddess. She presented Odysseus with the magic veil (*κρήδεμνον ἄμβροτον*) that enabled him to reach the Phœnician coast. Note that Homer's epithet is *καλλίσφυρος*. It might be thought that Milton's "lovely hands" was a perfunctory description. Perhaps, however, he remembered the passage later on in the fifth book of the *Odyssey*, where Odysseus, on landing, threw the veil back into the river:

ἂψ δ' ἔφερεν μέγα κῦμα κατὰ ῥόον, αἶψα δ' ἄρ' Ἰνὼ
δέξατο χερσὶ φίλῃσιν.

These last words may have suggested the "lovely hands" of the present verse. Leucothea was identified by the Romans with Matuta, the goddess of the dawn.

876. *Her son*, i.e. Melicertes; cf. *Georg.* I. 436, 437:

Votaque servati solvent in litore nautæ
Glauco et Panopeæ et Inoo Melicertæ.

After his deification he was called Palæmon, whom the Romans identified with *Portumnus* or *Portunus*, the god of harbours. Portunus is a character in Ben Jonson's Masque, *Neptune's Triumph.*

877. *Thetis' tinsel-slippered feet.* Thetis was one of the Nereids,

wife of Peleus (cf. Catullus' great poem) and mother of Achilles. *Tinsel-slippered* is an obvious variation on the Homeric epithet for Thetis —ἀργυρόπεζα; see *Iliad* XVIII. 127. It may be doubted whether Milton improves upon the literal version of the original—*silver-footed;* but perhaps he avoided using the latter because it had become hackneyed. Browne had already written in *Britannia's Pastorals,* book II:

"When Triton's trumpet (with a shrill command)
Told silver-footed Thetis was at hand."

Carew Hazlitt's ed. vol. II. p. 8.

Cf. again Ben Jonson, *Neptune's Triumph:*

"And all the silver-footed nymphs were drest
To wait upon him;"

also "silver-footed fays" in the same writer's *Paris Anniversary,* and Herrick's "silver-footed Thamasis"—Hazlitt's ed. p. 338. Milton's fastidious taste rejected a word that had lost its freshness,—an adjective which Keats restored to currency in *Endymion,* III., where it is applied to the stars. *Tinsel* now connotes something unreal. In Milton's time the word merely suggested a silvery, flashing surface, in accordance with its etymology: French *étincelle,* Latin *scintilla.* Thus Herrick in the *Hesperides* speaks of Oberon's palace "tinseld with twilight;" and again of "moonelight tinselling the streames"—Hazlitt, pp. 33, 177. For Milton's audience the epithet would possess a point which is lost on us, there having been a species of shining cloth called *tinsel* to which allusions are frequent. Hero's wedding-dress in *Much Ado,* III. 4. 22, has skirts "underborne (trimmed) with a bluish tinsel." So again in Marston's *What You Will,* I. 1:

"A Florentine cloth-of-silver jerkin, sleeves
White satin cut on tinsel."—Bullen's ed. II. 337.

In the stage-directions of Jacobean Masques we meet the word very often.

879. *Parthenope's dear tomb.* Parthenope, one of the Sirens, was associated with Naples ὅπου δείκνυται μνῆμα τῶν Σειρήνων μιᾶς, Παρθενόπης, καὶ ἀγὼν συντελεῖται γυμνικὸς κατὰ μαντείαν—Strabo, V. 246. Milton has the same allusion in one of the Latin poems *Ad Leonoram Romæ canentem,* 3:

Credula quid liquidam Sirena, Neapoli, jactas,
Claraque Parthenopes fana Achelöiados,
Littoreamque tua defunctam Naiada ripa
Corpore Chalcidico sacra dedisse rogo?

lines which Cowper translated:

> "Naples, too credulous, ah boast no more
> The sweet-voiced Siren buried on thy shore,
> That, when Parthenope deceased, she gave
> Her sacred dust to a Chalcidic grave."

Not infrequently Parthenope occurs as a synonym of Naples. Thus Wordsworth, in the fine sonnet composed on the eve of Scott's voyage to Italy, writes

> "Be true,
> Ye winds of ocean, and the midland sea,
> Wafting your charge to soft Parthenope."

So Landor:

> "Sorrento softer tale may tell,
> Parthenopè sound louder shell,"
> *Thoughts of Fiesole.*

880—882. *Ligea's golden comb.* Ligea was another of the Sirens; appropriately named Λιγεία = 'shrill-voiced.' The reference to her "soft alluring locks" may have been suggested by Vergil:

> *Drymoque Xanthoque Ligeaque Phyllodoceque,*
> *Cæsariem effusæ nitidam per candida colla.*
> *Georg.* IV. 336, 7;

lines which were probably the original of Landor's "Ligeia vocal, Xantho yellow-haired," *Chrysaon.* Otherwise, as Masson notes, it is rather the mermaids of northern mythology who comb their tresses, like the faithless wife in Matthew Arnold's *Forsaken Merman.*

885. *Heave*, i.e. lift; cf. *L' Al.* 145, "That Orpheus' self may heave his head." The phrase (repeated in *P. L.* I. 211, and *S. A.* 197) is imitated by Dryden, *Song for St Cecilia's Day* 5, and Pope, *Dunciad* II. 256.

886. *Coral-paven. Paven* did not necessarily imply artificial work. The "paved fountain" in *Midsummer N. D.* II. 1. 84 was "a fountain with pebbly bottom," Clarendon Press ed. of that play.

Sabrina rises. From the stage-directions in other Masques detailing the arrangement of parallel episodes it may be inferred that the appearance of the river-goddess would be effected as in a modern theatre. Part of the centre of the stage would be displaced, and through the aperture the goddess would rise, seated in her car and surrounded by a group of nymphs in picturesque dresses. The introduction in this way of deities—especially deities of the sea or rivers—

was a favourite device with Masque-writers, as it gave scope for the skill of Inigo Jones.

890. *Rushy-fringed.* A good specimen of what Earle calls the 'literary' compound; that is to say, the composite word created purely for picturesque effect and confined to literature. He notes that Milton, Keats and Tennyson are conspicuous for their frequent use of this artifice of language. It is even more characteristic of German writers.

892. *Sliding* is a favorite epithet with Phineas Fletcher:

"The Muses selves sit with the sliding Cam,"
Piscatorie Eclogues, II. 5.

893. *Agate.* Derived from the name of the river Achates in Sicily, where, according to Theophrastus, the agate was first found. Strictly, it is not a simple mineral, but a composite substance, made of two or more quartz minerals which have combined. The Western agate is much inferior to the Oriental, its chief centre of industry being a small district in Germany, between Oberstein and Idar near the Rhine. (Streeter's *Precious Stones*, part II. 59—61.)

Azurn. The termination may be that which we have in adjectives like *silvern, leathern*, formed straight from the substantive, i.e. *silver-n, leather-n.* Perhaps, however, Milton (an excellent Italian scholar himself) coined *azurn* as an Anglicisation of the Italian *azzurrino;* cf. F. *azurin.* The *New E. Dictionary* gives no other instance of the use of the word. Shakespeare was content with *azure* and the participial *azured:* so Marlowe, *Faustus* XIII. 109, "Arethusa's azur'd arms."

894. *Turkis.* Tennyson uses this now somewhat affected form:

"Turkis and agate and almondine,"
The Merman, III.

Properly the turquoise is not, as the name implies, a Turkish stone. The Oriental turquoise is chiefly found in a mountain region in the north-east of Persia; but it reached Europe through Constantinople, and hence became the Turkish gem *par excellence.* Like most precious stones it has been invested by popular superstition with curious powers. A Russian proverb says, "the colour of a turquoise pales when the well-being of the giver is in danger."

Emerald green. Emeralds are frequently found in river-beds in different parts of the world, e.g. in Burmah and Algeria; but Streeter in his long list of the varieties of the stone does not mention any English species.

895. The line illustrates, slightly but effectively, Milton's way of always correcting his work for the better. In the *Cambridge MS.* the verse runs:

"That my rich wheel inlays."

This is practically a repetition of the previous couplet, and we miss the idea suggested by "strays." With the cancelled line cf. *P. L.* IV. 701.

897. A reminiscence of the *Tempest*, V. 34:

"And ye, that on the sands with printless feet
Do chase the ebbing Neptune."

898. *Velvet.* Used frequently as an adjective; cf. "velvet buds," *Henry V.* I. 2. 194, "velvet leaves," *Passionate Pilgrim*, 231, and the very phrase of our text in *The Faithful Shepherdess*, II. 1, "The dew-drops hang on the velvet heads." Gray ventured in the *Progress of Poesy* to speak of "Idalia's velvet-green;" whereupon Johnson made objection: "an epithet or metaphor drawn from Nature ennobles Art; an epithet or metaphor drawn from Art degrades Nature."

899. *That bends not.* Many parallels might be quoted. Vergil made the remark of Camilla:

Illa vel intactæ segetis per summa volaret
Gramina, nec teneras cursu læsisset aristas.

So Shakespeare of Venus in *Venus and Adonis;* Ben Jonson of Venus in the *Vision of the Delight*, and of Earine in the *Sad Shepherd*, I. 1. Keats has an imitation in those lines of *Endymion*, IV., which Wordsworth called "a pretty piece of paganism:"

"A lover would not tread
A cowslip on the head,
Though he should dance from eve till peep of day."

903. The metre employed from this point to the end is much used in the Masques of Ben Jonson and other Masque-writers; perhaps because it lent itself easily to declamation or musical accompaniment.

904. Cf. 852—53.

908—921. The editors have noticed here, and indeed throughout the last part of *Comus*, echoes of the *Faithful Shepherdess*. Milton had without doubt read Fletcher's Pastoral; see *Introduction*.

914. Thrice. The significant number. We have a somewhat similar scene in Browne's *Inner Temple Masque*, where Circe releases *Odysseus* from sleep. Perhaps also Milton recollected the words used

by Puck when he anoints the eyes of Lysander—*Midsummer N. D.* II. 3. 77—80.

916. *Venomed seat.* The "enchanted chair" mentioned in the stage-direction at line 659.

918. *Palms moist.* In Shakespeare a dry hand is treated as the sign of a cold disposition, not prone to love; e.g. in *Twelfth Night* I. 3. 77; a moist hand as an indication of the opposite temperament—*Othello* III. 4. 36—38.

919. *His;* i.e. its; see note on line 248.

921. *Amphitrite's bower.* Compare Shelley's fine description of Venice in the *Lines written among the Euganean Hills:*

> "Underneath day's azure eyes
> Ocean's nursling, Venice lies,
> Amphitrite's destined halls."

In Cotgrave and in Cockeram's *Dictionary*, 1626, Amphitrite, properly the goddess of the sea, is given as a synonym of the sea itself.

923. *Anchises' line.* The legendary genealogy being: Anchises father of Æneas; Æneas father of Ascanius; Ascanius of Silvius; Silvius of Brutus; Brutus of Locrine. Cf. ll. 827, 828.

924—937. This invocation is in the manner of pastoral verse. In Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals*, I. 2, the friendly nymph of a stream receives the same kind of blessings. On the other hand, if a river proved unkind—drowned the poet's friend or what not—it was covered with curses. Thus we find an imprecation upon the Cam in Phineas Fletcher's *Piscatorie Eclogues*, II. 23:

> "Let never myrtle on thy banks delight—
> Let dirt and mud thy lazie waters seize,
> Thy weeds still grow, thy waters still decrease."
> Grosart's ed. II. p. 260.

927. *Snowy hills.* The Welsh mountains amid which the Severn rises.

928. *Singèd air.* Alluding to the midsummer days

> *ubi hiulca siti findit canis æstifer arva.*
> *Georg.* II. 533.

930, 931. Todd compares Sylvester's *Du Bartas:*

> "dirty muds
> *Defil'd* the crystal of smooth-sliding floods;"

reminding us that *smooth-sliding* is Milton's epithet for the river Mincius in *Lyc.* 86.

932. *Billows.* By this time—to interpret the passage prosaically—Milton has traced the Severn down to Gloucester, where it becomes an arm of the sea and, as such, may be said to have 'billows.'

933. The beryl is a crystal, varying in hue according to the district from which it comes. "Jewellers distinguish the varieties of this stone in a manner peculiar to themselves, viz.: the green and blue varieties they call Aquamarine, while the yellow variety receives the name of Beryl"—Streeter, *Precious Stones*, part II. p. 65. Perhaps Landor was thinking of the latter when he wrote:

"Rhine rolls his beryl-coloured wave."—*Gebir* VI.

The Romans prized the stone. The Cynthia of Propertius must have worn one (v. 7. 9), and Juvenal (v. 37) speaks of cups *inæquales beryllo.* In England it seems to have been put to various uses. Leland, for instance, tells us that the windows of Sudeley Castle were ornamented with beryls—Nichol's *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. I. p. xxvi. It may have been from the transparency of the stone that the belief arose in its power of revealing the future and reproducing absent persons if carefully studied; a belief to which Shakespeare alludes in *Measure for Measure*, II. 2. 94, 95, and which forms the basis of Rossetti's *Rose Mary.* From L. *beryllus* (Gk. βήρυλλος) came F. *briller*=to sparkle like a beryl; thence E. *brilliant.*

934, 935. Some editors would press the literal meaning and interpret "lofty head" of the river's source; as though Milton meant to say, 'may a town spring up, with buildings, terraces, towers, etc., near where the Severn rises.' But it seems more natural to take 'head'... 'crowned' as metaphors. All through run the two conceptions of (i) the river personified as a maiden, (ii) the river treated as an ordinary stream. In this line the former predominates. She is "Sabrina fair," the virgin; as such she is to wear a crown on her head, and be, like Cybele, *turrita.* Practically the same metaphor underlies στεφάνωμα πύργων in the *Antigone*, 122. The strong idealism of the passage is emphasized in line 937: "groves of myrrh and cinnamon," common enough in the land of poetic fancy, are not found in the West of England.

936, 937. The grammar is a little obscure, the connection, perhaps, *being, "may* thy head be crowned with groves of myrrh here and *there upon thy* banks."

938. After verse 937 both *MSS.*, Cambridge and Bridgewater,

have the direction—*Song ends;* which shows that lines 938—957 were spoken, not sung.

942. *Waste.* 'Unnecessary;' cf. "waste fertility," l. 729. 'Desolate' is the normal meaning in 17th century as in modern E.

945. *This gloomy covert.* Masson says: "Of course, what scenery there was on the stage represented them as still in the 'gloomy covert' or wood, some furlongs from Ludlow." This requires a word of explanation. We have not been told of any change of scene since line 659. In line 939 "this cursed place" must refer to the "stately palace" of Comus. We may assume therefore that during the speech, between 938 and 945, some alteration in the scenery is made by which the interior of the palace departs and the original wood is again represented, though only for a moment. Clearly by line 958 they are outside—"the stars grow high." Ben Jonson or Campion would have marked the change by a direction.

949. *Gratulate.* 'Welcome:' "And gratulate his safe return to Rome," *Titus Andronicus* I. 221. Cf. Cotgrave, "*Parabrin*, a gratulation, or welcome."

952. *Jig* signified a lively dance, or the tune accompanying it; and in Shakespeare any grotesque piece of verse. So *Hamlet* III. I. 150. Cf. Cotgrave, s. v. *farce*, "the Jyg at the end of an Enterlude, wherein some pretty knavery is acted." Probably of Scandinavian origin; cf. German *geige*, 'a fiddle.'

The Scene changes. Milton entirely disregards the unities of place and time, since (i) the Attendant Spirit and the brother and sister are supposed to have traversed the distance ("not many furlongs") between the palace of Comus and the castle at Ludlow; (ii) in lines 956, 957 it was night time, whereas now the action passes by daylight.

Then come in Country Dancers. Technically this is the second *Anti-masque;* the first was provided by the "monstrous rout" of Comus at line 93. *Country dance* is a good illustration of the process called "popular etymology;" *country* being a corruption of the F. *contre*, 'opposite.'

958. *Back, shepherds.* Cf. Jonson's *Masque of Blackness:*

> "Back seas, back nymphs; but with a forward grace
> Keep still your reverence to the place."

958, 959. A variation on *L' Al.* 97, 98. Shakespeare has *sunshine* as an adjective twice; cf. "many years of sunshine days," *Richard II.* IV. I. 221; and 3 *Henry VI.* II. I. 187.

960. *Duck* is cognate with Germ. *tauchen*, 'to dip.' In Cotgrave it is a translation of *plonger*, "to plunge, dive, duck."

962. *Court guise.* The dance might be a *pavane* or *minuet.*

964. *Mincing* here retains the idea of the F. *mince*, 'dainty,' 'neat.' Like *dainty* and *pert* the word has deteriorated in meaning, and its use now implies contempt. *Dryades*=wood-nymphs; from δρῦς, an oak. With the rhyme in this couplet, cf. *Lyc.* 154—156.

966. For the actors to come forward and address some member, or members, of the audience was no unusual episode. Thus in Shirley's *Triumph of Peace*, the chorus twice advance to the front of the stage and salute the king and queen who were present. Cf. the following extract: "Then the whole train of Musicians move in a comely figure toward the king and queen, and bowing to their state (i.e. canopied throne) this following Ode is sung:

> "To you, great king and queen, whose smile
> Doth scatter blessings through the isle,
> To make it best
> And wonder of the rest,
> We pay the duty of our birth."
>
> Shirley's Works, VI. pp. 277, 278.

972. *Assays.* 'Trials.' Cf. *P. L.* IV. 932, and *P. R.* I. 264. O. F. *assai* or *assay* was a variant of *essai*. *Assay* is the form used by Chaucer. *Essay* was first introduced by Caxton (*New English Dict.*); it took a long time to oust *assay*, which Spenser and Shakespeare nearly always write. Curiously enough *assai* has dropped out of French altogether, and *assay*, its English equivalent, from having once predominated is now used in a single sense, viz. testing of metals. Perhaps the fact that the French *essai* prevailed over O. F. *assai* favoured the growth of E. *essay*. *Essai* came from Lat. *exagium*, 'weighing,' 'a trial of exact weight.' Medial *x* in Latin often changed to *ss* in French; e.g. *essaim* (a swarm of bees) from *examen; laisser* from *laxare*. The medial *g* in *exagium* disappeared; cf. *lier* from *ligare*, *lire* from *legere* (Brachet).

974. *Triumph.* Milton, like Shakespeare, varies between *trĭumph*, the modern accentuation, and *triúmph;* for the latter cf. the Ode *On Time*, 22:

> "Triúmphing over Death, and Chance, and thee, O Time."

975. The stage-direction implies that after this line there was further dancing in which characters not named took part; they would be members of the household of the Earl of Bridgewater and friends.

976—979. The resemblance of these verses to the *Tempest*, v. 1 ("where the bee sucks"), has often been noticed. It seems to me clear that from this point, line 976, to the close of the Masque Milton's conception of the Attendant Spirit was due partly to Shakespeare's Ariel, partly to Puck in *Midsummer N. D.* As already explained, the epilogue spoken at the actual performance of *Comus* began at line 1012, "But now my task is smoothly done." The previous lines, 976—1011, had been used at the outset. Artistically the detachment of the passage from its context was a mistake. To end with a short speech of 12 verses (1012—1023) made an exceedingly abrupt conclusion; and, more important, the words of the Good Genius of the piece were no doubt intended to point the contrast between true Elysian joy and sensual earthly pleasure.

977. *Happy climes.* Cf. *P. L.* III. 567—70:

> "Or other worlds they seemed, or happy isles,
> Like those Hesperian gardens famed of old,
> Fortunate fields, and groves, and flowery vales;
> Thrice happy isles!"

Milton, as Professor Masson notes, is fond of drawing pictures of what we may call the Land of the Blessed. See the third *Elegy*, 38—50; the *Epitaphium Damonis*, 212—219; and *Lyc.* 172—177. In each case the language is entirely ideal, and the description a combination of different literary influences. He seems to have in his mind's eye the classical conception of the Elysian fields; the classical view of the Olympian deities and the Olympian realm; and, finally, that Christian presentment of Heaven which is largely due to the language of the *Book of The Revelation*. Especially noticeable is the infusion of the Christian element in the passage in *Lycidas* where, in the midst of pastoralism conceived after the manner of the Sicilian singers, Theocritus, Bion and Moschus, the poet declares that Lycidas moves among the heavenly companies who "wipe the tears for ever from his eyes."

978. Cf. *Il Pen.* 141, "day's garish eye."

979. *In the broad fields.* Vergil's *aeris in campis latis*, *Æneid* VI. 888.

982, 983. *Three.* The number varied, some accounts giving four; some three; some seven; and the names were different. In *P. R.* II. 357 Milton speaks of the "ladies of the Hesperides," where "Hesperides" = '*the garden or locality.*' *Golden tree*: usually the fruit only is golden.

984. *Crisped;* i.e. by the wind ruffling the leaves; cf. Keats, *Endymion* IV.:

"the wind that now did stir
About the crispèd oaks."

The word is more frequently applied to a breeze stirring the surface of water. So "crispèd brooks" in *P. L.* IV. 237, and the *Tempest*, IV. 1. 130. Parallels might be quoted from modern poets; e.g. *Childe Harold* IV. 211: "I would not their vile breath should crisp the stream:" or Tennyson's *Claribel*, 19.

985. *Spruce.* Here in a good sense, 'dainty:' so Vaughan in *Silex Scintillans* writes, "like some spruce bride" (Grosart's ed. I. 35). Cf. Cotgrave, s. v. *Godin*, "Neat, fine, trimme, spruce." But the modern, contemptuous meaning of the word was at least as old as Shakespeare's time; cf. *Love's Labour's Lost* V. 1. 14. Etymologically cognate with *Prussia*, of which the Middle E. form was *Spruce* (or *Pruce*). The connection seems remote; it arose thus. Hall's Chronicle tells us that at one time men of fashion "were appareyled after the manner of *Prussia* or *Spruce.*" So *spruce* suggested the idea of 'smartness,' 'fineness,' and people quite forgot that it simply meant *Prussian*. *Spruce fir*=Prussian fir; *Spruce leather*=Prussian leather; but in each case the original sense of the epithet has been lost sight of. See *Skeat*, s. v.

986. *Rosy-bosomed.* Gray 'conveyed' the epithet; cf. *Ode to Spring:*

"Lo! where the rosy-bosom'd Hours,
Fair Venus' train, appear."

It recalls the ῥοδόπαχυς of Theocritus (applied to Adonis), *Idyl.* XV. 128. We may note that the Graces and Hours were favorite allegorical *dramatis personæ* in Masques, which perhaps would give more point to the classical references. Lines 984—987 are wanting in the *Cambridge* and *Bridgewater MSS.*

989—991. Repeated in *P. R.* II. 363—5:

"and winds
Of gentlest gale Arabian odours fanned
From their soft wings."

So in the fifth *Elegy*, 69, *Cinnamea Zephyrus leve plaudit odorifer ala.*

990. *Cedarn.* Formed from the substantive, i.e. *cedar-n;* we need not connect it directly with Italian cedrino. Cf. 893.

Cf. Matthew Arnold's

"The slumb'rous cedarn shade,"

The New Sirens.

991. *Nard and cassia's balmy smells.* Here, and in *P. L.* v. 292, 93, Milton is obviously adapting to his own purposes the language of Psalm xlv. 8: "all thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia." It seems misleading to print *Cassia* as though the word were a proper name; *cassia* being merely a species of scented laurel. Cf. Cotgrave, "*Casse*, The drug, or spice tearmed cassia...*Casse aromatique*, the aromaticall wood, barke, or bastard Cinnamon." Under *Nard* he writes "Spike, or spikenard; (an herb)."

992. *Bow*, i.e. the rainbow.

993. *Blow.* Transitive; usually said of the flowers themselves, as in *Midsummer N. D.* II. 1. 249, "where the wild thyme blows," = 'blooms.'

995. *Purfled.* 'With embroidered edge;' cf. the *Faerie Queene*, I. 2. 13:

"Purfled with gold and pearle of rich assay;"

and II. 3. 26:

"Purfled upon with many a folded plight."

From F. *pourfilé:* i.e. *fil*, 'a thread,' and *pour* (Lat. *pro*) confused, as often, with *par* (L. *per*), 'throughout.' Cf. Cotgrave: "*Pourfiler d'or*, To purfle, tinsell, or overcast with gold thread;" and "*Pourfileure, Purfling;* a purfling lace or worke, baudkin-work, tinselling." *Purfle* (the noun) survives in the contract form *purl*, a term used in lace-making. Between 995 and 996 the *Cambridge MS.* inserts a line, giving the colours of the flowers—"yellow, watchet, green and blue." *Watchet* meant 'pale blue;' cf. Cotgrave, "*Pers*, watchet, blunket, skie-coloured."

Shew. For the rhyme cf. l. 512.

997. Cf. *Arcades* 72, 73.

998—1002. By using "Assyrian queen" in line 1002 Milton reminds us that the Adonis legend came from the East. Still more definite is the reference in *P. L.* I. 446:

"*Thammuz* came next behind,
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
In amorous ditties all a summer's day,
While smooth Adonis from his native rock
Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded."

Commenting on this passage Masson remarks: "The legend was that he (i.e. Thammuz = the Adonis of Greek mythology) was killed by a wild boar in Lebanon; and the phenomenon of the reddening at a particular season every year of the waters of the Adonis, a stream which flows from Lebanon to the sea near Byblos, was mythologically accounted for by supposing that the blood of Thammuz was then flowing afresh. There were annual festivals at Byblos in Phœnicia in honour of Thammuz, held every year at the season referred to. Women were the chief performers at these festivals—the first part of which consisted in lamentations for the death of Thammuz, and the rest in rejoicings over his revival"—Masson, III. p. 124. This Eastern cultus (cf. *Ezekiel* viii. 14, "and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz") spread to Greece, taking the form of the familiar Adonis myth: that he was killed by the wild boar, was mourned for by Aphrodite, and at last, in consideration of her sorrow, suffered by the gods of the lower world to spend six months in every year upon earth with her. His yearly return to earth was celebrated by religious rites (at Athens, Alexandria and elsewhere) such as Theocritus describes in the XVth *Idyl.* The story must have been a comparatively late importation into Greece, as no traces of it occur in Homer. Usually it is explained as being a symbolisation of the annual return of spring: "in the Asiatic religions Aphrodite was the fructifying principle of nature, and Adonis appears to have reference to the death of nature in winter and its revival in spring—hence he spends six months in the lower and six in the upper world"—Smith's *Classical Dictionary.*

998, 999. Referring to the so-called "Gardens of Adonis,"

> "That one day bloom'd, and fruitful were the next,"
> 1 *Henry VI.* I. 6. 7;

where the very roses (on which Adonis lay) were thornless, as we may gather from Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels* V. 3: "I pray thee, light honey-bee, remember thou art not now in Adonis' garden, but in Cynthia's presence where thorns lie in garrison about the roses."

Milton, we may be sure, recollected the long account in the *Faerie Queene* (III. 6. 29—42) of this paradise where Adonis was supposed to live in company with Aphrodite; cf. too, Spenser's *Hymne in Honour of Love*, 22—28. Keats imitates Spenser in *Endymion* II.; and Spenser probably owed his ideas on the subject of these mythical gardens to Pliny, *Natural History* XIX. 4. An alternative region

symbolising the ideal region of bliss was the Garden of Alcinous, and in *P. L.* IX. 439—441 Milton gives us the twofold allusion:

"Spot more delicious than those gardens feigned
Or of revived Adonis, or renowned
Alcinous."

1000. I.e.

"the wide wound that the boar had trench'd
In his soft flank"—*Venus and Adonis* 1052, 53.

1002. *Assyrian queen*, i.e. Aphrodite; "her worship was of Eastern origin, and probably introduced by the Phœnicians to the islands of Cyprus, Cythera and others, from whence it spread all over Greece. She appears to have been originally identical with Astarte, called by the Hebrews Ashtoreth, and her connection with Adonis clearly points to Syria"—*Classical Dictionary*. "Assyrian queen" may have been suggested by the title Συρίη θεός, a synonym for the Syrian Astarte. Cf. the *Nativity Ode* 200—204, with the double reference to "moonèd Ashtaroth" and "wounded Thammuz."

1003—1011. The myth of Psyche is an allegory of the human soul (ψυχή) which, after undergoing trials and tortures, is purified by pain and eventually reaches happiness and rest. Probably Milton introduced the story here because he wished to emphasize the sanctity of love, by showing that there is a place for it among the gods. "Comus," says Masson, "had mis-apprehended Love, knew nothing of it except its vile counterfeit...had been outwitted and defeated. But there *is* true Love, and it is to be found in Heaven." The idea is well illustrated by *P. L.* VIII. 612—629, where Adam questions the angel Raphael—"Love not the Heavenly Spirits?"—and receives the reply—"Without Love no happiness."

1004. *Advanced.* Almost a metaphor, since *advance* was specially used of raising a standard or banner; cf. *P. L.* I. 535—537:

"Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurled
The imperial ensign; which, full high advanced,
Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind."

Frequent in Shakespeare; for a beautiful instance cf. *Romeo and Juliet* V. 3. 94—96, where Romeo is pointing to the body of Juliet:

"Beauty's ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips, and in thy cheeks,
And death's pale flag is not advanced there."

This last line was borrowed by Giles Fletcher in Christ's Victorie in

Heaven, 14, "And, after all, Death doeth his flag advance," Grosart, p. 97. Cotgrave gives "to raise, advance, lift up" s. v. *monter*.

1011. *Youth and Joy*. Referring to the passage from the *Apology for Smectymnus* quoted in the note on line 780 we see that later in life Milton made Virtue and Knowledge the offspring of pure Love. Perhaps time had brought to him "the philosophic mind" which Wordsworth celebrates. He was 25 years old when he wrote *Comus;* 33 when he wrote the *Apology*.

1012—17. The beginning of Lawes' epilogue, and a series of reminiscences of Shakespeare: e.g. *Midsummer N. D.* IV. 1. 102, 103, where Oberon says:

"We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter than the wandering moon:"

the same play, II. 1. 175, Puck's words,

"I'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes,"

i.e. make the circuit of the universe: and *Macbeth* III. 5. 25, 26:

"Upon the corner of the moon
There hangs a vaporous drop profound."

There, as here (1017), corner='horn' (*cornu*); cf. the compounds *bicorn*, *unicorn*.

1015. *Bowed*, because in any landscape the horizon appears to rest upon the earth. The clown in *Twelfth Night*, III. 2. 65, preferred *welkin* ("out of my welkin") to *element* because the latter was "overworn." For etymology, cf. German *Wolke*, a cloud.

1019. Ben Jonson's *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* (the Masque in which Comus appears) ends with a song in praise of Virtue. The last stanzas run:

"She, she it is in darkness shines,
'Tis she that still herself refines,
By her own light to every eye;
More seen, more known, when Vice stands by;
And though a stranger here on earth,
In heaven she hath her right of birth.

There, there is Virtue's seat:
Strive to keep her your own:
'Tis only she can make you great,
Though place here make you known."

The first lines of this extract may be compared with *Comus* 373—75; the last stanza would seem to have been in Milton's memory when he finished his Masque.

1021. *Sphery.* 'Celestial;' cf. *Midsummer N. D.* II. 2. 99, "Hermia's sphery eyne," where 'starlike' (as in Tennyson's "starlike sorrows of immortal eyes") is the sense. *Sphery* is one of the many epithets ending in *y* that Keats uses—

"Hold sphery session for a season due."
Endymion III.

1023. There seems to be an echo of this verse in Pope's *Ode on St Cecilia's Day*, VII.

1023, 24. Masson writes: "Respecting these closing lines of *Comus*, in which the moral of the poem is summed up, there is an interesting anecdote:—Returning to England in 1639, after his year and more of continental travel and residence in Italy, Milton passed through Geneva. There was then residing there, as teacher of Italian, or the like, a certain Camillo Cerdogni or Cardouin, of Neapolitan birth, and probably of Protestant opinions; and this Cardouin, or his family, kept an Album, in which it was their habit to secure the autographs of distinguished persons passing through the town. The volume itself, rich with signatures and inscriptions and scraps of verse in all languages, is still extant...Among the autographs in it are those of not a few eminent Englishmen of Milton's time, including Thomas Wentworth, afterwards the famous Earl of Strafford; but the most valued autograph is Milton's. It is as follows (all in Milton's hand except the date):

—if Vertue feeble were
Heaven it selfe would stoope to her.
Cœlum non animum muto qui trans mare curro.
Joannes Miltonius,
Anglus.

Junii 10. 1639."

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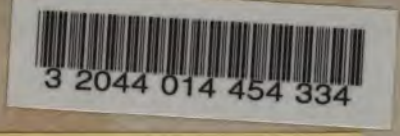

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